OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

TERRITORIAL RIGHTS

AND

COMMERCIAL PRIVILEGES

OF THE

EAST INDIA COMPANY,

WITH A VIEW TO THE

Renewal of the Company's Charter;

IN A LETTER TO A

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT.

"The maintenance of the MONOPOLY of the EAST INDIA COMPANY, is even more important to the POLITICAL INTERESTS of the STATE, than it is to the COMMERCIAL INTERESTS of the COMPANY."

Right Honourable Henry Dundas's Letter, 21st March, 1801.

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The following pages are the substance of several Letters, written in the course of the last summer, on the policy of renewing the Charter of the East India Company. These Letters had the good fortune, in their original shape, to make an impression, favourable to the view of the writer, on the mind of a distinguished Member of the House of Commons, to whom they were addressed; which induced a subsequent request, on his part, that they might be communicated to the public in a connected form, with some scattered notes on certain heads, which appeared to stand in need of explanation, from the loose manner in which they were originally treated. A request so flattering the Author could not withstand; but

he fears lest it may have betrayed him into the weakness of believing, that the effect of his observations may be general, when all their influence is owing to private and personal partiality.

ON THE

POLICY OF RENEWING

THE

EAST INDIA COMPANY'S CHARTER.

TO ————, M. P.

Dear Sir,

You entertain too high a notion of my knowledge of Indian affairs, in supposing that it may enable me to afford you any material information on the almost inexhaustible subjects, connecting themselves with the renewal of the East India Company's Charter. It is true, that, like many others, I have resided several years in the East, but have not brought away with me, I am afraid, so much local intelligence, as might be thought to correspond with the length of my residence. This may be ascribed, in some sort, to my not having been employed in the service of the East India Company; a circumstance, that might have opened to me various sources and opportunities of information, which are closed and denied to the merely licensed sojourner, who is usually left to find his way by his own lights, and his own researches. But though this circumstance may abridge the sum, and the value, of what I may have to com-

municate, it will have the advantage of flowing from a pure fount, uncontaminated by a suspicion of partiality or of prejudice. Whatsoever I possess, you have a right to demand—and I impart it without further apology.

I entirely agree with you, in thinking, that the question of the renewal of the Charter is agitated at an unfavourable season, and under circumstances most inopportune. The confined state of our external commercial relations, from the political situation of Europe, and consequent mercantile distress, have made our manufacturers and merchants most anxious for the discovery of available openings for trade, and naturally jealous of every species of exclusion. It is not to be wondered, then, from the known operation of individual interest, that men should look to their supposed immediate good, rather than to more remote advantage, by seeking the extension of the trade to India, with the expectation of gain to themselves, though it should be at the hazard of the safe course, in which it has been hitherto conducted, and of the national benefits derived from it. The interests and passions set in motion by the influence of these exciting causes, have been, unadvisedly, and certainly unintentionally, aggravated by a general and loose declaration of an official organ, giving colour and countenance to the clamour, universally raised, for a free and open trade.

I shall not stay to enquire into the motives of Ministers, whatever they may be, whether proceeding out of large political considerations, personal or party relations, or official apprehensions, that have led them to declare in favour of the public pretension to the participation of the Indian trade: I lament, only, that such declaration

has been unfortunately made, and in so unreserved and unqualified a manner; without any explanation of the policy inducing it, or the objects it has in view. Without a developement of this nature, the public may form, as it is to be feared they have done, erroneous and extravagant notions, that Ministers never meant to raise, and may not be permitted to realize; but which, when once indulged, it will be difficult to repel by reason, or subdue by authority.

There is, apparently, a wide and sensible difference between the expectations of the mercantile world and the intentions of Ministers, so far as they are expressed, as to the meditated extension of the trade to India. Each of these opposed parties agree in principle, though they differ in degree, as to the participation of commerce, to which the public ought to be admitted, within the chartered limits of the Company: and neither of them wish to interfere, it seems, with the territorial possessions, or with the establishments, civil or military, by which they are governed and protected. The latter they would leave untouched; so that a commercial intercourse, more or less, be permitted with them, and with other friendly local states, within the circle of the Company's boundaries. So that the simple question, whether the Charter shall be renewed or not, is not likely to arise for discussion, or, if it do, it will not seemingly encounter any contrariety of judgment. It is determined, on all sides, that it be renewed, though with certain modifications, according to the different conclusions of men, as to the latitude or quality of them.

I congratulate you and the House most sincerely, that you are not again exposed to any difficulties and

embarrassments about the principles of government, adapted, or supposed to be adapted, to the British Indian possessions—to the power to be lodged in the hands of those exercising the chief authorities, or the manner of using it. These, as we hear of no material intended regulations, may generally be understood as standing on a safe and fair footing; free from the reproach of arbitrary rule on the one hand, and of oppression on the other. The revolution of the public sentiment in this respect, even in a time of general ferment, is not less complimentary to the national justice, than it is honourable to the East India Company; who, by a wise policy, in awarding a most ample provision to their public functionaries, have removed the temptation to offence, and have secured the fidelity of those in trust, by raising, in every well-constituted mind in their service, so general an abhorrence of abuse, as to render the practice of it dangerous, and consequently rare. Thus, from the acknowledged melioration of the administration of the powers of government, and improvement in the condition of the native subjects of India, no nice and perplexing considerations will present themselves, that might have a tendency to shake the established rule, together with the very foundation of our eastern acquisitions; and, eventually, by the change and shifting of power, from known to unknown hands, might endanger and overturn the hitherto equipoised parts of our own original and happy constitution.

But though this evil be removed by time and fortunate occurrences out of the way of the Legislature, while devising or fixing a future government for our eastern possessions, its deliberations will not be unembarrassed

by evils of another sort, which the times and circumstances have engendered. If the Legislature be not called upon to protect the rights and interests of a distant and foreign people, it will be importuned with a loud and boisterous clamour, arising out of imaginary pretensions and grievances, at its very door. Hence the evil escaped, may be more than counterbalanced by the evil superadded.

It would seem to require extraordinary prudence to moderate the public expectation, stirred and animated as it is at this time by public feeling; and more especially as that feeling has unexpectedly received a stimulant, where some would have looked for a corrective or check. Whether Ministers, from a want of confidence in their yet untried strength, or from a desire of conciliating the public mind to their initiatory measures, at first inconsiderately gave way to the popular pretensions, it is not necessary to examine, nor material in the issue. They have since had time to reconsider their act, and what is still better for their ministerial reputation, and, perhaps, existence, they have had an opportunity, by a dissolution of Parliament in the interim, of placing their power on a more ascertained, if not on a more permanent footing, if they have the wisdom and the courage to adopt a course congenial to their station, to act on their own policy, unswayed by the cry of the giddy crowd on the one, hand, or powerful solicitation on the other. Such a conduct is more open to their adoption, from the circumstance, which for another purpose has been condemned, that, though they have pledged themselves to admit the public to the participation of the Indian trade, they have not bound themselves to any precise plan, by which it is

to be regulated, or the exact extent to which it is to be carried. All that the Board of Controul, speaking for Ministers, have at present declared, is, that the public shall be admitted, by the new Charter, to share in the trade, with the single exception of China, within the limits hitherto reserved to the exclusive commerce of the East India Company. This concession, however, is not absolute, but circumscribed by terms, to be hereafter discussed and adjusted by the Legislature, in contemplation of the rights of the Company, already in possession of the entire trade, and the indispensable means of prosecuting it. There is a safe interval for repentance, which, if Ministers do not embrace the benefit of for themselves, it is to be hoped, that the Legislature will employ, in carefully and cautiously examining their questionable policy.

Whatever the views of administration may be, it is yet to be learnt, what *remote* advantages are to be expected from the intended modification of the Company's Charter, for the prospect of *present* good they profess to disregard themselves, and to discourage in others.* The Public,

* Observe what Lord *Melville* says on this subject, in his Letter of the 21st of March, 1812.

" You will do me the justice to recollect, that in all our discussions on this subject, both recently, and on former occasions, the admission of the ships of merchants in this country into the trade of India, in concurrence with these of the Company, has never been urged as a measure, from which much immediate benefit would, in my opinion, be derived, either to the country, or to the individuals who might embark in the speculation; and I am certainly not without considerable apprehension, that, at least, on the first opening of the trade, the public expectation, as to the British territories in India affording any considerable outlet for British manufactures, beyond the amount of our present exports, may be disappointed."

on the other hand, under the influence of a partial patronage, demand a full, free and unbounded enjoyment, as of natural right, of all the branches of Indian Commerce. They look at India, without reflecting on the length and nature of our intercourse with it, as a vacant soil—open to the cultivation of every adventurer, who shall think fit to cultivate it—a productive, rich field, to which they have a right; equally with the Company, in common parcenage; and hence they set up a loud, undaunted cry, as if it had never been before urged and silenced, against monopoly and usurpation.

You, who are not unacquainted with Parliamentary History, must know, that "MONOPOLY" has been the constant warhoop against the Company, for more than two centuries, so often as the renewal of their Charter has fallen under discussion; and that it has always been put down, as often as it has been raised, by the voice of reason and sober sense. It has gained additional strength of late, by the added vociferation of political speculatists, who in an indiscriminate zeal, would confound, without distinction, the Company's peculiar and qualified privileges, in a common condemnation with ordinary monopolies; which are and ever must be odious. This would seem to make it necessary, that I should endeavour to get rid, *in limine*, of this reproachful and disparaging cry, which, however it may apply to common cases, cannot attach, in my humble apprehension, to the regulated monopoly of the East India Company. This will lead to the consideration, on which I shall but slightly touch, of the History of the Company's Trade.

Taking it for granted that you are informed, as matters of notoriety and history, of the circumstances of

the rise and progress of the British Commercial Intercourse with the East, I shall treat very generally of facts, though I may indulge rather more particularly in apparent inferences from them.

It would seem sufficient to assert, that for nearly two centuries, a state of commerce has been maintained between this country and India, more or less in degree, according to the varying conditions of mercantile adventure from the genius of distinct intermediate æras. The commerce with that distant clime, from its first commencement through all its gradations, has required, from its very nature, a larger capital, than individuals could be expected to furnish, for advancing its requisite ends. At the earliest date, so long ago as the reign of Edward the 6th, we have to notice the association of noblemen, merchants, and manufacturers, for prosecuting a trade with India, through the medium of a joint-stock company: And this it may be said, with a temporary deviation in the time of the protectorate, which was soon abandoned, has been considered as the only safe way in which such a commerce is manageable. The large vessels, suitable to the voyage, the outfit and incidental expences, the value of the cargo, the great intervenient distance between the two countries, the consequent long duration of the different stages of the adventure, the numerous means, domestic as well as foreign, absolutely necessary for conducting it, proved, from the beginning, the impracticability of carrying on the trade on the single capital of individuals.

It was also felt, in the very infancy of the intercourse, from rival nations, (the Portuguese and the Dutch) being already embarked in the same speculation,

and from their having obtained a local establishment, that it would be necessary, in order to keep up a commercial connection with the then newly-discovered world, free from interruption, to establish certain mercantile depôts, and factories, on the coasts of the Indian Seas. These were requisite, as well for the primary purpose of refreshment to our ships, as for giving security and permanency to our commerce, by expediting, through the mediate agency of persons on the spot, the disposal of the outward cargo, and the provision of the homeward returns.

Little time elapsed, from the first settlement of this nature, before it was discovered that further means were essential, in fortifications on shore, and armed vessels afloat, to protect the opening trade, from the selfish arts and practices, and, in many instances, the open and daring attacks of foreign, contending adventurers. It will be unnecessary to recapitulate the various impediments, arising naturally out of the undertaking itself, or opposed by adverse interests, disturbing and hazarding its success, that baffled the early efforts of the first Indian enterprises. The detail would only present a disgusting account of piratical and murderous events, that shock and shame humanity, and could scarcely have been tolerated by any civilized country, if they had not happened at such a distance, as to defeat any immediate controul, and if they had not been of such atrociousness, as to be difficult even of belief. It will be enough to remark, that the necessity of such defensive establishments called for an increased capital, and led, as a matter of course, to larger mercantile associations. The nation was not prepared, either from its little regard to commercial pur-

suits, the advantages of which were not sufficiently understood, or from its naval power, such as it was at this interval, to put forth its arm to protect the growing trade. The discovery of this new source of commercial riches, the prosecution and the defence of it, in all its parts, was, for these reasons, abandoned by the state to the enterprise of associated individuals. At their own cost, their own hazard, and for their own benefit mainly, but relatively for the public good, it was permitted to them, with broader or more confined principles, correspondent with the temper of the times, to institute foreign factories, and to defend them by military out-works.

Local establishments necessarily involved the new settlers, through a community of interests, in the concerns of the neighbouring nations, and more especially of that from which they were allowed a permissive right of habitation; and this communion, operating with other natural causes, had a tendency to engage them in mutual defensive obligations, and subsequently in offensive league, with the surrounding states. These, with other concurring circumstances, connecting themselves with similar establishments, founded by the adventurers of other nations, and the consequences they superinduced, led, in process of time, to institutions of a more warlike and determined character, which changed the pure principle of the original design, and converted it, from a mere commercial speculation, into a political scheme, partaking more of a national character, than of a mercantile transaction. This second and mixed state of Indian commerce required a still further increase of pecuniary resources, fitted to the complex exigencies of the new situation, not only demanding a more extended

capital to supply them, but new concessions on the part of the Government, and renunciations on the part of the Public, to induce reasonable men to proceed on so vast, so fluctuating, and so perilous a plan.

Successive Charters are granted by successive Kings, stamping the persons engaged in this commerce with a perpetual corporate capacity; bestowing on them an exclusive privilege of local trade; arming them with a power to acquire and possess foreign dominions; to erect forts; to raise armies; to make peace and war, so that it affected not Christian Princes; with all the common and distinguishing incidents of sovereignty. These encouragements, that mark the second æra of the Company's history, were given by degrees, within the inclusive reigns of Queen Elizabeth and William the Third, and induced the East India Company to erect factories at almost every convenient place of trade, washed by the Indian seas. The different monarchs recognised in the Charters, from time to time granted by them, the principle of a joint-stock and exclusive trade, as adapted to a commercial intercourse with so distant and so peculiar a country.

The slight change introduced in the reigns of James and Charles, though affecting the original and previously established Company, did not vary materially the principle just asserted; Indian commerce being still treated as an exclusive commerce, from which the nation at large was shut out—although certain favourites were let into the enjoyment of it, by the grace of the respective Sovereigns. The only direct aberration from the principle of exclusion, as before remarked, took place in the time of Cromwell, and a

free trade was, in consequence, indulged and pursued; but this failing in its intended objects and operation, and being found to be practically inconvenient and unwise, was soon after relinquished, when things were restored to their original state; and the Protector, though a favourer of innovation, became, on conviction, the follower and imitator of the policy of his predecessors in power, by granting an exclusive Charter, with extensive and liberal endowments.

All the Princes, within the period in reference, treated the East India Company with especial favour—stimulated them to exertions in the prosecution of their foreign objects—and one of them affected to treat them as sovereigns having a distinct rule, independent of the parent state; refusing to take any cognizance of their acts, or to redress alleged injuries to foreign courts, arising out of them; referring the foreign states to seek their remedy at the immediate hands of the Company.* In addition to this extraordinary mark of royal courtesy and delicacy, the East India Company received a more solid instance of attention from Charles the

* There is an eminent instance of this, at a much later period, which occurred in settling the preliminaries of the Treaty of Paris—and which is noticed by Mr. Macpherson, in his valuable History of European Commerce with India, page 192. To the French Minister's requisition for the restoration of certain territories, taken from the French by the East India Company, the British Minister is stated to have made the following explicit declaration and reply:—

" Respecting those territorial acquisitions the English East India
" Company have made in Asia, every dispute relative thereto must be
" settled by that Company, the *Crown* of *England* having *no right to*
" *interfere* in what is allowed to be the *legal* and *exclusive property* of
" a *Body Corporate* belonging to the English nation."

Second, in the cession and alienation to them, in perpetuity, as absolute lords and proprietors, of the valuable Island of Bombay; a practical comment on the capacity of the Company to enjoy foreign territory, according to the principle of their Charter, by the cession of local sovereigns. This recognition it may be well to keep in mind throughout the observations that I have subsequently to offer.

I have forborne to notice the various and fluctuating fortune, which attended these different stages of the Indian trade—the changes of capital required in the prosecution of it—the occasional interruption it experienced from foreign states, that only served to invigorate its course, and the opposition it intermediately encountered from the British public, which somewhat impeded its march, but finally rendered it more firm and steady. Foreign rivalry, through the powerful medium of joint and consolidated companies, demonstrated the necessity of an organised and embodied resistance—and this, in the progress of things, became so clear and obvious to the meanest judgment, as to countervail the pretences set up, at different intervals, by interested individuals, for altering the course and conduct of the enterprise, by throwing it open to the nation at large.

It has been my endeavour to trace generally the principle and process of Indian commerce, to the period at which it is now arrived, without troubling you with more historical circumstances than are strictly requisite to elucidate my statements, and to sustain the inferences drawn from them. I have not, therefore, delayed you by accounts of the particular profit and loss of the Company at certain periods of their adventure—nor of the

direct and indirect benefit accruing to the nation at large, from the manner in which it was conducted. What I have hitherto had in view, is, to demonstrate, that commerce with India, from the beginning, could not be carried on and maintained, from the inherent nature of it, as well as from the relative state of things, at the time at which it was first attempted, by any other medium than of an exclusive Company: that it was of necessity a monopoly: that any other course of trade, which depended on single efforts and individual caprice, which might be assumed and laid down at pleasure, was not calculated to the object: that at the very outset—it required strong and concentrated means to force the introduction of it:—that it needed a methodised and increasing support in its progress, which neither individual exertions, nor resources, nor humours, were capable of administering:—that these could only be supplied, constantly kept up, and systematically directed, by a large and wealthy association, acting by their Directors, under their joint consent, and not on the particular policy and interests of separate private persons, which, drawing distinct ways, would have induced endless distraction, instead of one great and uniform end: that a variety of statesmen had recognised, from time to time, the principle of exclusive trade, as applicable to our intercourse with India, and as indispensable to the management of it:—that successive Kings, acting on their counsel, had favoured the principle recommended; and in furtherance of the policy which it dictates, had condescended, even to delegate their principal prerogatives, and suffered them, without jealousy, to be exercised (a strange and novel experiment) by a subject-body: that such prerogatives were at all times

considered necessary to be communicated for the successful issue of the adventure, and, demanding an entirety in the use, could not have been placed in the hands of separate parties, however respectable they might have been, without producing as changeable a rule, as there were persons to exercise it: that there was no reason to repent of the principle at first laid down, for the government of the Indian Trade—nor was there any deviation from it, except in a particular instance, and for a short space, and in an innovating age: and such temporary and occasional departure, so far from lessening the authority of the principle acted on, confirmed, by its miserable success, or, rather, by its utter failure, the superiority, if not the sole fitness, of the policy, originally adopted, to the administration of our affairs with the East.

The first trade to India was carried on, as it has been shewn, by the means of a monopoly; depending on the will and authority of the crown. Neither the country, nor the crown itself, except perhaps in private presents and gratuities, and those of no great amount, derived any pecuniary compensation, within the periods described, for the *abandonment*, if the expression be warrantable, of our Indian Commerce to an exclusive company. There was nothing in point of fact to abandon. The foundation of trade was to be laid; to be built upon as opportunities offered; and to be finally established by resources and exertions, that could only be afforded by an extensive body of men. The nation at large could not expect to find more advantage from this, than any other species of commerce, prosecuted from its shores, and it did not certainly derive less. Even in the earliest

days the Indian Trade was made subservient to the general interests of the country, by affording a vent for several exportable staple articles,* and an opportunity for the importation of others of the most vital political importance.†

In proportion as the trade opened itself, it, in the same degree, demanded fresh energies and increasing capital; not productive, in the usual routine of commerce, but to be laid out, to a large amount, in dead, or slowly-yielding stock—in purchasing and providing the facilities, nay even the indispensable necessaries, the instruments, the very implements, as it were, in factories and forts, for sustaining its first footing and gradual progress. This capital was eagerly furnished, and in a way most advantageous to the country. It was not taken from one branch of commerce to be diverted to another—by the successful use of which little could possibly be added to the stock of the whole; but it was more than half subscribed by persons, who, from station, profession, and sex, could not personally engage in trade; and, strange as it appears, by the subjects of other powers; all and every one of these, however foreign their habits and their relations, were made to assist in the success of an enterprize, purely national, and exclusively British. At the present hour, the funds, on which this trade is carried on, bear this originally distinctive feature.

The successful application of these funds, to the nurture of our Indian Trade, had advanced and matured it, at the instant contemplated; so that it had gained an introduction every where, where it might be thought de-

* Woollens and Metals. † Saltpetre, &c.

sirable to introduce it—so wide and expanded an establishment, with so multifarious and so large an expenditure attached to it—that it became an imperious matter of prudence, with those embarked in the adventure, whether it should be pursued, to its possible extent on the precarious tenure by which it was then held. The magnitude of the capital employed, with well-grounded doubts of the efficacy of the Royal Charter, for securing and continuing the future advantages of exclusive trade, which began now to be generally expressed, made the East India Company desirous of obtaining the consent of Parliament, in confirmation of their preexisting charter; which promised, when obtained, to put their possession on a more safe and lasting foundation, and to create a third grand and coveted æra in their constitution.

The first Parliamentary sanction of the Company's privileges occurred shortly after the Revolution; and whatever stability or other advantages it might be supposed to realise to the Company, it had undoubtedly the effect, from that time to the present, of keeping it under constant parliamentary controul, and under perpetual contribution.

I shall pass over the short history of the new and rival Company, created by the 9th and 10th of William the IIId, on the consideration of a public loan of two millions of money—the failure of its objects—and the great national, as well as private mischief* produced by it; which

* This was occasioned by excessive exportations of Bullion and Merchandize; the latter of which, owing to the glut of the Market, could not find purchasers abroad—and by equally extravagant importations of Indian Manufactures—to the ruin of our own Artizans and Manufacturers.—The act constituting the new Company, passed towards the

the Legislature, that had occasioned it, was almost, on the instant, supplicated to remedy, and which ended in bringing back the commerce into its first and simple channel, by leading, in a sense of mutual advantage, to the incorporation of the old and new Company, at the beginning of the reign of Queen Anne; which Company, so united, has continued ever since, by virtue of repeated Charters, and various Acts of Parliament, to carry on the exclusive Commerce to the eastward of the Cape of Good Hope.

It would be beyond the present purpose to go into an enumeration of the particular times, at which the exclusive privileges of the United Company have been confirmed, by Charter and Acts of Parliament, from the time of Queen Anne to the present reign; or the sums of money that have been absolutely given, or temporarily lent to the country at a small rate of interest, or without interest at all, in consideration of the renewal of them; or to trace, with any minute care, the relinquishment, on the part of the Company, of direct claims on the country, or the advantages rendered by it, by the sacrifice of the Company's interests, under parliamentary stipulations, to the paramount interests of the State. It would seem sufficient to shew, that within the present reign only, the Company has contributed to the exigencies of the State, either in cash payments, or contributions scarcely less direct, the large aggregate amount of 5,135,319*l*.*

end of the Session 1698—and was repealed in the spring of 1700, by the 11th and 12th of William the IIId.

*See the printed paper (No. 17) submitted by the Court of Directors to the President of the Board of Controul. Appendix D. Page 57, of the papers respecting the negotiation, &c. Black and Parry.

Within the interval, immediately noticed, the Charter was confirmed by express Act of Parliament, not less than three times; and on every occasion of renewal, the privileges of the Company have undergone an exact and severe investigation. It were impossible that any more close scrutiny could be had into the merits of any system, both in regard to principle, operation, and effects, than was instituted in the years 1783-4, and afterwards in the year 1793, with respect to the Indian system, as then in application to the administration of our eastern affairs.

The Indian Bills of Mr. Fox and Mr. Pitt are fresh in recollection, and tend, in their memorable result, to prove, that however the two great authors of them might differ on other points, they entertained one and the same opinion, as evidenced by their respective bills, that a regulated monopoly, as established through the instrumentality of the East India Company, is alone suited to our Eastern Commerce. These enlightened and rival statesmen had not to form a judgment on hasty or visionary data, but on experimental grounds, from the view of a large and discovered principle, in its broad and direct use, for a long series of years. However distinct and wide from each other, the notions of these eminent politicians might be, on the capacity of the Executive Body of the East India Company, for the discharge of the delegated functions of sovereignty, with due effect to the subjects placed under its guardianship and government, they neither of them doubted its competency for maintaining the Commercial relations created by Charter, and confirmatory acts of the legislature; much less doubted they the wisdom, policy, or justice, on which the exclusive privileges, favoured by the crown

and the legislature, were at first conferred, and ultimately secured. They perceived, as every discerning eye must see, the necessity, in the first stage of the British Indian intercourse, for united capital and united efforts, to fight and combat against the intrigue and force of commercial adversaries in the territory, the seat of the intended enterprise: nor could they fail to observe, what more extended and more conjoint aids would be required, in a further advanced stage, for securing the footing which should be adversely won from the opponents of the adventure. Every Parliamentary provision, made in the progressive advance of the trade, during the third æra, the Company and the Public could not but contemplate as an approbation, on mature reflection and experience, of the principle on which the trade was conducted, and of its adequacy to its end.

The virtue of the Parliamentary sanction was seen in its immediate effects, now observable to all. It had given the authority of the state to the grant of the Crown—it had bestowed a seeming permanency on the grant, by the frequent renewal of it, and had sanctioned the exercise of the rights which it conveyed by numberless formal recognitions. Under the faith and encouragement of these acts the Company enlarged their views; they contented not themselves with a mere biding place, but surrounded it with a circumjacent domain; purchased or ceded out of grace by the local proprietors. A fixed interest in the soil entailed on the Company, not only the defence of their own territorial possessions, but called on them to contribute to the aid of the Princes, from whom they derived their lands. The latter service obtained new cessions: these increasing in value and con-

sequence, began to demand protection, and hence followed the erection of fortresses, and the constitution of regular troops. The growing importance of the Company's territorial establishments inflamed the enmity of foreign colonists and settlers, and more especially of the French. As the latter could not make, from national considerations, direct and open war upon the English, in these their foreign possessions, they contrived, by busy intrigue, to stir up animosities, or excite pretensions in the neighbouring Potentates, that could not fail to engage the rival European Adventurers on distinct sides of the controversy to which they were calculated to lead. The fruit or effect of this policy disappointed the views of those who conceived it. Though it served to plunge the Company in unbounded temporary expense, and diverted their capital from the purposes of trade, it tended to increase their influence, by direct territorial acquisitions, and to raise their credit by an impression, which it afforded an opportunity of making, of their constancy and courage. Local strife and warfare induced local alliances — and their natural consequences were a partition of spoil and of conquest. These called forth, in time, constant military establishments and large standing armies; partaking, as circumstances demanded, of a mixed nature and form, Asiatic, as well as European; the former, from the numbers nearer hand, being, at all times, the main ingredient of which the armies were composed. The military ardour and spirit of the British soldiery communicated a part of its character to the native troops embodied with them in the same ranks; and, by their joint and well-directed force, the Company succeeded in a variety of struggles, which it is not necessary to specify, against foreign European

powers, in conjunction with native states, both in indirect hostility, and in open and legitimate contest, distinguished by all the features of public and national warfare. In none of these conflicts, numerous as they were, had the Company recourse to the parent state, either for pecuniary resources, or for military succour, save in the form of a stipendiary or subsidised assistance, and *that*, considering the scope of their own military establishments, to a comparatively small extent. In some late instances, at the meridian of the Company's power, they have themselves returned the partial boon which they had received, not only with interest, but with generosity unparalleled and unrequited,* in contributing with their proper and peculiar force, to the pure enterprises of the state, in defeating the ambitious purposes of the national enemy, and reducing or destroying his possessions.

Passing lightly over the annals of the East India Company, from the date of the Parliamentary confirmation of its privileges, as well as the acts that have rendered them distinguished, I would direct your consideration to the effects alone, to which it led.

It had the immediate tendency of encouraging the East India Company, under the prospect of a more regular and continued possession, to step beyond the boundaries, ascribed to their factories, and, in a favourable turn of circumstances, to exceed the narrow confines

* The expedition to Egypt is in proof of this, as is also the reduction of the French, and Dutch, and Danish settlements on the Peninsula: the capture of Ceylon, [and the Dutch settlements, particularly Java and its dependencies, to the eastward, and *Mauritius* and Bourbon, the last possessions of France and her allies to the east of the Cape: The expenses of the captures are not yet fully paid to the Company; and some of them, with shame be it mentioned, are unhandsomely and ungenerously disputed.

of trade, to found an empire of its own; containing within it not only the first and necessary means, but presenting the very field and source of commerce itself. It had changed a mere casual domicile, into a fixed and established dominion: it had converted a permissive trade into an absolute independent commerce. By making it an end, instead of a mean, it had reduced commerce, which was a principal, into the quality of an accessary, or subordinate incident or consequence. In the course of this remarkable and unavoidable revolution, the agents or instruments were raised, as well as the ends themselves. Instead of private, undistinguished adventurers, prosecuting their simple, mercantile speculation, within a circumscribed limit; with a few straggling ships afloat; with a handful of civil servants on shore; and with a restricted purse; we have to witness the elevation of the East India Company to the proud rank of sovereigns; the conversion of their scanty shipping, into a powerful fleet, giving direct employment to 8000 seamen, and about 1400 Commanders and Officers; the constitution of a mere compting-house appendage into three extensive establishments of enlightened civil servants; a military force, locally created, vying almost in strength and numbers with our national armies;* a Territory, reduced into quiet and peaceable possession, more than co-extensive with the Mother Country, with a population, quadruple in number to the subjects of the parent state; with a Revenue of fifteen millions annually; with a capital, or credit, actually avail-

* The Company's armies at the three principal presidencies constitute a body of 140,000 men, commanded by upwards of 3000 European officers.

able, and employed on these grand and commanding objects, exceeding fifty-one millions sterling.*

These are the plain, direct, and discernible results to the East India Company itself, from the exercise of the exclusive privileges permitted to it; nor is the beneficial effect to the state less essential, though, probably, not so striking or apparent.

The state has had the good fortune to reap, almost in direct contribution, during the existing reign only, above five millions of money.† It has a security for participating, according to legislative provision, after the Indian territorial, and other authorised debts are discharged, and the moderate legal interest on the Company's capital defrayed, more largely even than the Company itself, in the surplus revenue of its territories. So that, if in future times, more income shall be collected than is sufficient for the exigencies explained, it will go not into the coffers of the Company, but into the public treasury. In the mean time, it has substantially and solidly profited, in the export of the staple articles and the manufactures of the country, to the amount of more than one million per annum;‡ and in

* How this capital is employed, and of what it consists, is distinctly stated in the Papers printed for the information of the proprietors of East India stock. Vide, *Papers Respecting the Negotiation, &c.* pages 55, 56. The amount specifically devoted to the Indian and China trade, is not less than 21,000,000l. See Page 144 of the same Papers.

† The actual amount of contributions from the East India Company to Government, between the years 1768 to 1811, was 5,135,319l. Vide, Papers respecting the Negotiation, page 57.

‡ The average export of woollens, (always a losing trade) is 1,129,942l. All other export articles together, do not exceed the annual average value of 863,238l. See Page 126 of the Supplement to the 4th Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons.

the imports of foreign produce, in customs and excise, omitting smaller considerations, it has received from the Company's hands more than four millions sterling annually.* The country at this moment possesses three regiments of well disciplined troops, maintained entirely at the expense of the Company, for its internal defence; and several thousands† of the British population, more easily conjectured than to be computed, are constantly kept and employed in the domestic establishments of the Company, or from the influence and demands of its trade, not only from being burthensome to the state, but are rendered instrumental to its good.

If such the origin and effects of the exclusive privileges of the East India Company, it is not to be wondered that statesmen, like Mr. Fox or Mr. Pitt, though bold enough in their political conceptions, should not venture to trench upon them, so as to affect the one or the other materially. It is left for other times to demand another policy; and for other statesmen to meditate a change in our established Indian relations.

With what justice the popular outcry is raised against the East India Company's monopoly, as it is called, and with what reason it is seemingly regarded by the present race of statesmen, may be learnt from the brief preceding account of the history of the affairs of the East India Company. What is there, it may be asked, in the Company's exclusive privileges, as explained, that should subject them to the same common odium, in which common monopolies are wont to be holden?

* The duties in customs and excise amounted in the year, ending in January 1811, to 4,213,425l. See Page 57 of the Papers respecting the Negotiation, &c. &c.

† These are stated, in a moderate estimate, at 30,000 persons.

Were the Company's privileges, in their foundation, or present expanse, granted as a boon from the crown, at the expense of the nation at large? This I take to be the leading circumstance, exciting hatred against monopolies in general. Is this feature to be found in the exclusive privileges of the Company? Did the crown take any thing valuable from the common possession, to throw it with a lavish bounty into the lap of the East India Company? This has never even been asserted. What, in point of fact, had the crown to give? A naked right to trade with a scarcely discovered world---a bare permission to seek a commercial footing, by its own device, in a strange land. If the mercantile body of the community be restrained from competition in the new adventure, and has ever since been restrained, it is out of the ordinary care of the state towards its common members, in exercising a discretion belonging to it, in controlling all public acts, which may interfere with the public interests. The trade of the state, as all other its concernments, is alike submitted to the government of the state. It must be regarded, not as it may simply affect the commercial part of the community, but as it may touch the great body of the nation. If the latter interest require that the trade be conducted by a part of the mercantile body, instead of the whole, the less must be given up to the greater interest, the society of merchants, to the society at large. But what is fit at one season, in consultation of the general good, may, under other circumstances and times, be directly opposite. It might be right, at first, to conduct the Indian trade upon an exclusive principle, but after it had obtained a certain stability and maturity, it might be thought wise to alter the course and manner of it. This,

however, would be the care of succeeding governments, as times or circumstances should appear to be ripe for the alteration: and if no change has been introduced, the necessity of it, it may be supposed, has not hitherto been apparent. But as it was the duty of preceding periods to take care for themselves, so it may be deemed to be the duty of the present day, to guard its own peculiar interests; and in the exercise of this office, it is the fashion of the passing hour to condemn, not only the universal principle of monopoly, as applicable to general trade, but the modified and regulated application of the principle to the exclusive and long approved Commerce of the East India Company.

I have already shewn, that the streng feature which pervades monopolies generally, disfiguring and rendering them repulsive, is not to be found on the face of the Company's qualified monopoly. It will be my endeavour to shew, in a few words, that it differs as much in its ordinary, as it does in its primary and distinguishing feature.

It is the property of monopoly to act on a pure selfish principle—to acquire for itself—keep all things to itself—to suffer no participation. Now, from the first to the last, in every intermediate stage, the public has been constituted, if not a nominal, a real and substantial partner, not in the losses indeed, but in all the benefits, be they what they might, of the Company's commercial proceedings. Not a ship has traversed the Indian seas, at any period of the adventure, but some price has been paid by the Company, either in the shape of compulsory exports, or stipulated returns, or in hard gold, for the license or privilege of sailing. The full gain of any adventure has not been permitted to flow in a natural

direction, into the pockets of the East India Company; but has been impounded, as it were, beyond a limited amount, in the hands of the Company's executive, and subjected to the controul and will of the state. The Company, from the very outfit of its trade, has not been permitted to draw to the extent of the present and immediate profits deducible from it, but has been obliged to apply the mesne produce to increase the capital of trade, or to enlarge or fortify the sphere of it. All its extra accumulations in commerce have in this way been exhausted and applied, in the purchase, improvement, and defence of its territorial possessions, to many times the amount of the productive commercial capital. Even large sums, equal to a national revenue, have been borrowed and added to such gains, to eke out what was wanting to complete this *necessary* work;* which was to rescue our Eastern commerce from a state of uncertain dependence on foreign powers, and place it on the sure basis of independent absolute tenure; to change an unreduced right, held in common with every people on the face of the universe, into an unqualified and private possession. In the annexation, even of the extensive territorial possessions, which are now added to, and indeed form the very foundation on which our Eastern commerce is erected, the state has contrived to render them as well as the commerce itself, contributable beyond a certain bound to the services of the community. The Company, instead of pursuing a monopoly, then, as it is

* It must not be presumed from this expression, that the Company always considered the extension of territory as necessary, or desirable; for they have often, formally and sincerely protested against it, in opposition to the policy and acts of their local Governments. It is not requisite to enquire whether the Company or the Governments were right in all, or any particular instance.

improperly termed, has been following a joint adventure, in which the nation has at all times shared the benefit, without being at any time liable to loss: or, rather, the Company has been the instrument or agent for carrying on a lucrative commerce for the public, without any capital of the public at risk, and without any trouble of management. Where then is the sense and signification in the cry of monopoly, as respects the East India Company? If there be any establishment more strictly free from the demerits of a common monopoly, it is the very establishment under contemplation. In any view, the most unfavourable for the Company, in which it can be taken, it is a purchased privilege at a given price, fixed by the legislature. The Company has not been indulged with any gratuity whatever, at the expense of the public. The latter, surely, cannot let out the soil for hire, and set up a pretence to cultivate it on its own account.

But it may be said, that the country has not made a conveyance of the Indian trade to the Company, in perpetuity, but solely for a term of years: that such term is now on the eve of expiration, when the leased rights will revert to the public, to be again let out or holden, at the public discretion, in its own hands.

There can be no doubt, it is presumed, of the authority of the state to resume its own grant; though abundant doubts may be rationally entertained of the prudence, under existing circumstances, of such a resumption. It will not be forgotten, in considering the propriety of renewing or resuming the grant, what has been collaterally and lawfully acquired by the Company in the interim, independent of the mere exclusive right of

trade. In pursuing the latter, the Company has availed itself of a distinct capacity, not only co-extensive with the term of the grant of the exclusive privilege of trade, but a perpetual capacity, unlimited in extent, and unfettered in the enjoyment, of purchasing and acquiring lands. In the lawful exercise of this capacity, it has actually possessed itself of vast and valuable provinces and principalities, in which the most desirable branches of the Indian trade are cultivated, and are capable almost exclusively of cultivation : these stretch along the whole range of the sea-coast, from the Ganges, through all the intermediate territory, with one solitary exception, to the Persian Gulph, running in a transverse direction many hundred miles into the interior of the Indian Peninsula.

Besides the capacity to take and enjoy lands, the Company has a further privilege, equally as large and unbounded, of a corporate character, also, to prosecute its commercial speculations on a joint stock capital and in an aggregate body. The actual possession of these rights, of an indissoluble nature, separable and divisable from the right of the mere exclusive privilege of trade, which is temporary only ; which may be exercised by the Company, whether the latter privilege be continued or withheld, and which, if exercised, must make an open trade of less relative value ; is a circumstance that must force itself on the notice of the legislature, if it have not a direct influence on its deliberation, when it comes to the consideration of the policy of annulling, or extending the Company's Charter.

It will not be, as at first, a question, whether the instrumentality of a regulated Company, or an open

competition, be best adapted to the maintenance of a commercial intercourse with India. Things have undergone an entire and radical change since that question arose: There is not now, as then, a new commerce to establish. The trade is in a mature state, and incapable, in the most sanguine minds, of much, if any addition. It is in the possession, principally, in the *proprietary* possession of persons, not to be thence wrested, unless by a species of violence, who first prosecuted and have invariably cultivated it; whose efforts have created, and made it what it is.

The Indian trade ,then, cannot be resigned, it may be said, into the hands of the public, as it was originally leased out. It was delivered as a whole, but with a privilege to the Company, confirmed from time to time, to appropriate *that,* which must necessarily tend in its consequences, to the appropriation of more or less, as it might be found convenient, of the commerce; i. e. the thing granted, inasmuch as it should depend, as undoubtedly it does, on local or territorial sovereignty. Not only the privilege itself, but all the instruments and facilities to the enjoyment of it were granted, to push the privilege to its greatest possible extent. Territories, new sources of revenue and of trade, have in consequence been conquered and appropriated, under the eye and approbation of the governing power of the state, and with the means, standing armies and sovereign authority, placed, wisely or otherwise need not now be examined, but actually placed in the hands of the Company. These territorial acquisitions, as it has been before observed, have exhausted, either directly, or in their consequence, the greater part of the commercial profits of the East India

Company, and have engaged their credit to an almost incredible amount, in the hope of rendering them, in the probable and natural event of things, so many certain, if not new provinces of commerce, to be an ultimate reward to their exertions, in any adverse conclusion being put to their exclusive trade. In any other consideration, than that these were an absolute untangible property, in any and all events, it would be impossible to account for, or justify the proceedings of the Company, on the ground of prudence or common sense.

In the letter and spirit of the Company's Charters, and the statutes affording them their sanction, the right of acquiring and possessing territory, and of holding it in perpetual enjoyment, is written in too clear a character to be susceptible of misconception. If they were not intelligible in themselves, the conduct and acts of all parties concerned, are decisively in favour of the construction immediately stated. The Company in every territorial acquisition, whether obtained by conquest or cession, from any of the Asiatic unchristian princes, against and with whom the unlimited power of making war and peace is delegated by the crown to the Company, has invariably assumed to itself the conquered or ceded countries, without any qualification whatever; whether acquired by the sole instrumentality of its own armies, or in union or conjunction with the King's forces. No participation has been claimed at any time, either on behalf of the crown or the people, in a single appropriation of this nature. The crown has not reserved to itself even a right of interference, in no other case abandoned, in the distribution of transitory property, in spoil or capture from the enemy, to the reward of its

own military retainers : nor has it laid claim to one sign of superiority, however small, over the native people, that have passed, with the territory, under the government of the East India Company. Over these, as over the territory itself, the Company have been left in the entire and unqualified sovereignty, and have exercised it without question or interruption, and have in consequence involved itself in all the wide and multiplied expenditure, attendant on the military and civil establishments, adapted to the sovereignty over a great people. It would seem impossible to disconnect the idea of permanency from rights, and the undisputed and undisturbed exercise of them, such as those I have just described; for it would be necessary only to advert to the effects that must spring from an opposite consideration of them, in the changes and accidents to which they would perpetually give rise, to discountenance a supposition that they could ever have been intended for a transient or temporary use.

There are those who might contend, in contemplating the privileges granted by the crown, and sanctioned by legislative enactments; the unrestrained use and enjoyment of them; the events to which they have led; the important consequences which they have induced; the faith that they have inspired in the Company; the resulting responsibilities they have involved; the great relative and reciprocal obligations and duties they have raised, both as regards the Company, and unnumbered millions of native subjects : there are those, I repeat, who might argue for the indefeasibility of rights, which, if dissolved, or dissoluble, might throw so many, so important, and such conflicting interests into uncertainty

and confusion. I have not been led, however, into the general observations just offered, to lay the foundation for an argument of this extent. I do not mean to question here, or any where, the omnipotence of Parliament to annul those powers, which it has itself served in some sort to create, or to deny or withhold the means by which alone they can be hereafter retained. I know too well how much the interests of the Company, and the general interests of the state are intermixed and depend upon one another, to contemplate any separation but on a good understanding, if not in mutual consent. But I have dwelt more on this particular subject, than I might otherwise have been disposed to do, from the undisguised pretensions of the public, every where avowed, under the ill-directed notions of the day, to leap at once into the inmost recesses of the Company's possessions, and into a common and unceremonious participation of those advantages, which have been produced and maintained by its private exertions, and its proper means. As if at the termination of the Company's Charter (could a notion so wild and extravagant enter into the head of any sober or reflecting being ?) the whole community, the sum and total of the English population, the rabble many, and the refined few, for all or none succeed to the contemplated vacant possession, should be indiscriminately let loose, without any preliminary provision, or precautionary measure, on the wide regions of Asia; to affright the natives in their homes; to beard the Company in their dominion; to disturb them in their possessions; to elbow them in their pursuits; and to dispute and contend with them for the ground on which they stand. There is no politician, however wild his

scheme of Indian policy, however jealous of the Company's privileges, and of the rights reverting to the public on the expiration of the charter, that can entertain a serious thought of turning adrift on the plains of India, so many of the British population as shall chuse to go thither; or can have any other than one opinion of so monstrous a proposition. Yet the advocates for a free trade insist on the proposal in its most comprehensive compass.

But, though I do not contend, for it is not necessary to contend, for the absolute right of the Company in their territorial possessions, I yet consider that they have acquired such a clear and equitable interest in them, by permissive appropriation, long tenure, maintenance and preservation, as to bar the entrance of the public, under any pretence which the ordinary rule of justice, or the dictate of legitimate policy, can tend to favour. It would be much easier, I should conceive, to maintain the highest possible sense of property in such possessions, as the most strenuous advocates of the Company's rights seem to entertain, than to argue in support of so outrageous a supposition, that the British populace, as of mere right, without any preliminary consent, or compromise, may force themselves, on the determination of the charter, into the Company's Indian possessions; converting, with the trade itself, the local seat of it to their own use. There are visionaries, I am aware, in policy, as well as commerce, who make common league and war, under their respective excitements, against the unfortunate East India Company; producing a sort of compound hostility, that savours more of the rancorous quality of a private feud, than of public and generous

warfare; but, to whatever degree of hostility the personal feelings and resentments of individuals may have carried them, I have never heard that they have so far misled them, as to make them wholly blind to the claims of the Company on the public consideration; although the nature and extent of those claims may be variously estimated.

Much of the odium directed against the East India Company originates in a misconceived notion of their character, as supposed monopolists, in the vulgar acceptation of the term. This presumes, that they have taken and retained to themselves, under an undue preference, what of right belongs to the general stock; and this circumstance has had the natural effect, during the operation of the delusion, of arming all persons against the Company, who shall imagine themselves injured by the supposed usurpation of their rights. No common pains have been taken to spread the impression, and stir the jealousy of the public mind. But the latter must cease, as the true situation of the East India Company shall become known.

I have shewn, and I hope satisfactorily, that the charge of monopoly, in the common sense and understanding of the word, is not imputable to the East India Company; that, although the privilege of exclusive trade has been granted to them, it has not been awarded on any principle of favouritism, but out of a particular policy, which has been supposed by the constituted authorities, and the representatives of the people, to be alone applicable to our Eastern Commerce: that such policy has not been acted on, without respect to the public interests; that these have been attended to in as direct a manner, as was

consistent with the views of such policy; that in practice or effect, the policy has been productive of the benefits generally expected of it, though it may have disappointed and defeated the views of a certain class of subjects, who, looking only to their own interest, contradistinguished from the Company's, may have lost sight of the larger object, the public weal, which stands on a principle distinct from either, though reconcileable, in fact, with the good of both. Whatever the differences of the opposed parties may be, whatever remedies they are capable of, and whatever consequences they may induce, it will not be forgotten in the Parliamentary discussion, now fast approaching, in considering the merits of each, that there is a third party to be regarded, more interesting than the other two. Much is to be reconciled between the great body of the Merchants and Manufacturers of the United Kingdom and the East India Company, but more between these two warring and conflicting interests, and the country at large.

It will be for Parliament in its general wisdom, and general controul, to interpose in, and moderate these adverse pretensions. It is already called upon by the East India Company, to determine its future functions and the character it shall bear in the administration of our Eastern Affairs. It will be for Parliament to decide, whether the whole system of our Indian Government shall be recast, for the sake of favouring a speculative policy, or whether it shall be retained in its primitive shape and spirit, with such easy, practical alterations as may be found necessary, from the change of times and circumstances.

The Company have at least a title of long undisturbed possession, and of repeated recognition; a ground, tenable

against all claimants, who cannot discover a better title. Before it can be dispossessed of what it holds, it will be incumbent on those, who wish to oust the Company from its possessory rights, to shew a preferable title. They must succeed, too, if they ever do succeed, by the strength of their own claims, not by the slander of the Company's pretensions. It will be in vain for them to aim at the delusion of the House of Commons, by exhausting all the arguments, that speculative minds have raised against monopolies, their unfavourable bearing on public improvements, and their unfitness, compared with individual exertions, to the due extension of commerce. The answers to these objections may be found, not only in the peculiarity of the Company's monopoly, the particular nature of its objects, and the limited extent of it, but in the sanction it has received from the approbation of so many authorities, and from the test of long experiment.

If, however, the arguments against the Company's exclusive trade presented themselves for the first time, they are not so authoritative as to repel all question. It may be true, that the country would derive greater benefit from the pursuit of an open, ordinary commerce, by the exertion of the whole community, in separate and individual enterprise, than by the industry of any given number of persons in a joint capacity. It may be true, that the very nature of joint trade excludes the idea of that thrift and œconomy, which is practised by single adventurers; and that it holds not out that constant stimulus, in the shape of sole and direct profits, to the furtherance of every separate mercantile scheme. That it may be hence expected, that an individual will be more active and inquisitive, a Company more indolent and careless; that the one will create mercantile objects;

while the other may neglect those which are present to their hands. But giving due weight to every one of these suggestions, they decide nothing in the instance to which they are applied.

The Indian trade, from the first moment it was pursued, to the present hour, could not be considered as an ordinary trade, nor could it be followed in the ordinary course. Obstacles were opposed to it, both at the beginning, and in its whole progress, that called for more general exertions and for larger capital than individuals could supply. The trade, even at its maturity, is of a limited and delicate kind; and though it might possibly have been enlarged by the commercial zeal and enterprize of individuals, it also might have been endangered by the same means. Eagerness and excess of zeal might have crushed a commerce, in its birth, which is admitted on all sides to be of a puny and curious texture. The trade of India, like all great undertakings, depended for success, on a regular and orderly prosecution of it, not on a sudden and instantaneous impulse; more on perseverance, than immediate force. Individual zeal, directed by individual interest, and acting on its own principle, looks only to its own good, is abated by every disappointment, and overwhelmed by the defeat of its adventure: let it be ever so prosperous, it aims but at a single object—it begins and ends with itself. The views, on the contrary, of an united body of Merchants, such as the East India Company, are more large and combined—the spirit which is called into exercise is of the same kind; it is not to be raised or disconcerted by any one event, for it pursues its ends, not by fits and starts, but by organised and systematic means; in its success it is not elated into extraordinary speculations;

in adversity, as its losses are divisible and shared, it falls not into despondence or despair; it looks not for immediate, but ultimate gain; and therefore does not anticipate it, on any single necessity or occasion, but patiently awaits it as a conclusion of the whole. If one would seem to be more active, the other is more patient and enduring; if one be more adventurous, the other is more secure. If the one may achieve more individual gain—the other, it may be inferred, from the stability of its undertakings, may more promote the interests and the service of the state.

Not wishing to dwell on the obvious advantages, which a Joint Stock Company must possess, over insulated adventurers, in a slow and distant trade, requiring a large capital, and growing expense, I shall labour not to establish a position, which would seem sufficiently self-evident; that if the East India Company has some disqualifying properties inherent in its constitution, in common with other joint companies, for prosecuting the trade with India, it has at least some qualifications of its own, that have tended to facilitate our early commercial intercourse with that country; have maintained and preserved it in its progress, and have brought it to its present perfection, whatever that may be. It has presumption and prescription in its favour, and is not to be defeated by opposite presumptions, carrying with them neither age, experience, nor authority.

They who seek the overthrow of the Company's privileges, must prove, that they do not answer the ends for which they were granted; or that those ends would be more largely advanced by a different disposition of things; or, in other words, that the interests of the

country are not consulted, as originally intended, in the mode of carrying on the commerce with India, through the medium of the Company; but would be beneficially increased, by throwing open the doors of the trade to the general body of its merchants.

The first or negative position need not be examined. It is from its nature incapable of proof. If the latter or affirmative proposition be established, it would seem necessarily to include what is predicated in the first. If the trade to India be capable of increase, in any considerable degree, so as to render it important in a national point of view, by the admission of the mercantile community to the participation of it, it would seem to follow, that the interests of the country are not served, as suggested, by suffering the trade to remain exclusively in the hands of the East India Company. There are, however, other great and leading considerations, involved in the proposition, that I have touched upon elsewhere, which are not to be overlooked, but which I wish not to repeat, being anxious to proceed to the examination of the question, whether the public interests are likely to be increased and sustained, as it is asserted, by an open and indiscriminate, instead of a restricted and regulated trade.

It will be the business of those, who wish to drive the Company from its possessions, to shew to the conviction of the House of Commons, ere it can sanction any material innovation, that the British Asiatic dominions may be made more useful and profitable to the parent state, than under the exclusive Government, political as well as commercial, but more especially the latter, of the East India Company. It is theirs to prove, an indispensable task, that our eastern commerce is now depressed,

in the hands and management of the Company; that it admits of extension, and would be extended on other principles of management: that the great body of our manufacturers and merchants would be benefited, and the public revenue consequently augmented, proportionately with the success of their efforts, in extending the scope of trade.

I am free to confess, that if the opposers of the Company's charter should succeed in establishing these various grounds, there could be no serious denial of the right, respecting still the Company's separate acquirements, for which they principally and strenuously contend. But as the consequence would be so serious to the Company, and the country itself, the conclusions insisted on will be investigated, in all their relations, as thoroughly as the facts and premises from which they are supposed to be deducible. All the stale arguments against monopolies—all the novel speculations arising out of loose, undefined principles—the laws and maxims of general political economy, will be regarded only, as they shall be found to adapt themselves to the object, on which they are supposed to bear. They may be truisms in general application, but unfounded and fallacious in reference to the particular case.

The commerce with India, say they who are advocates for a free trade, is fruitful and inexhaustible in its objects, and immeasurable in extent. It affords a wide field for the exportation of our manufactures, a most valuable and never-failing return of native local produce, and the exchangeable works of art, which would lead, if properly managed, to the encouragement of our mechanics and artisans, in the sale of their superabundant store, and in the supply of materials for fresh and future labour—a

consequent employment for the capital and exertion of our merchants, with all the resulting national benefits following and flowing in natural course: that this commerce, if rightly understood, has not been adequately maintained by the East India Company; that neither its capacity, capital, nor constitution, is calculated to embrace a commerce of such variety and magnitude; that it has, therefore, been neglected, or not sufficiently cultivated, and suffered to remain a waste, even at a season of unparalleled commercial distress, when our manufacturers and merchants are drooping and decaying for the want of opportunities of exercising their particular callings.

The latter melancholy circumstance has had an undue operation, it is to be feared, on the public mind, in its view of our existing eastern commerce. The temporary sufferings of the manufacturing and mercantile interests, appear to have excited a jealousy against a branch of commerce, which is least of all affected by the causes, that have diminished for a while our other mercantile outlets and resources; and to have given an importance, an ideal, not a real consequence to it, which never has, and never can belong to it. Hence it has been heightened in a fanciful degree, to the eyes of those, who covet, and sunk, in the same proportion, and under the same influence, in the hand which possesses it.

The truth is, as is shewn by the well known and authenticated history of British Indian commerce, that, with however an extensive track of country it is maintained, and with however numerous a population it communicates, it has been of secondary or little value, as a trade of export; in which quality it is particularly

respected, in the extraordinary notions, now entertained of it. *

The Indian trade, in its incipient state, was almost entirely carried on by the medium of bullion, which is no inconsiderable ingredient in its support, in its present more perfect condition. By the subsequent care and policy of the Legislatûre, by the correspondent attention of the East India Company, and, moreover, by the favourable form of its constitution, that could submit to such a sacrifice, the naturally-limited outward commerce has been extended, at the sole expence of the Company;

* The fact is established, beyond all controversy, in the genuine history of Indian commerce; submitted by the Select Committee of the Court of Directors, and annexed to the Supplement to the Fourth Report of the Committee of the House of Commons, on the Affairs of the East India Company. The Report abundantly shews,

"That India, under Asiatic Sovereigns, never had any capital of its own, applicable to European commerce."

"That the native inhabitants never had any genius or inclination for distant enterprises."

"That the manufactures, in European demand, were set on foot, at our first intercourse with India, by money exported from Europe."

"That, from the date of our territorial possessions, the private fortunes of individuals, and the tribute of India, have generally furnished the capital for exports."

"That there is no capital in the hands of the natives, for the extension of exports from India."

"And that the vent for European manufactures is limited and incapable of extension, from physical, as well as moral causes."

Every one of these positions is made out by satisfactory evidence,

by a regular and large export of the first staple article of the country, in a fixed quantity of wrought woollens.* Except in the instance of unwrought metal there is no other branch of export, as relates to the native population of India, that is even worth mention.

The private trade of the Company's maritime officers need not be taken into the account; as it is confined solely to the use and consumption of British subjects, under a licensed residence in India, and for the most part retained in the Company's civil and military service, and to a mere handful of the descendants of foreign Europeans, Portuguese and Dutch, thinly scattered at the different Indian Presidencies. This species of commerce is liable to the same consideration with domestic trade. It is a consumption of our own manufactures by our own subjects, with little modification. It admits not of material increase, and in what it may be increased, it is in so much a diminution of the consumption of the like manufactures at home. If it be thought that the manufactures of India may usurp or supply the place, in some respects, of articles of British workmanship, the advantage may be understood as more than compensated, in the improved ability of European

which would seem irrefragable. *Vide* page 16, *et infra*, of the Supplement to the Appendix to the Fourth Report; and the Letter of the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the East India Company, to the Right Hon. R. Dundas, p. 13, and onwards, of the papers respecting the negotiation, &c. published by *Black* and *Parry*, octavo edition.

* The annual export of woollens exceeds one million. This, though prescribed at first by Charter, has of late been kept up, in a spirit of patriotism, or in the pure bounty of the Company.

residents, from local employment and gains, to purchase and consume a greater quantity of their own native products and commodities, that will have contributed in a larger degree to the benefit of the mother country, by the circumstance and consequence of their transit to India, through the mercantile purposes which they shall have intermediately answered.

What has been said of the Indian trade, as it regards our own country, is referable to all the countries and states, that have at any time engaged in it. The very genius and nature of the trade forbid any extent of exports. It is the reverse of a trade of barter, or mutuation, or exchange of commodities. The history of the Dutch and French adventurers and companies, and of the more recent mercantile schemes of the Americans, is in proof and confirmation of this assertion; which, it is conceived, is not liable to any serious or specious question. Have the old and new worlds, who have kept up a commercial intercourse with India, been alike deceived in the capacity of the trade? All equally blind to the discernment of their own interests in the prosecution of it? Or has any fresh light, and what, broken in upon us from the surrounding cloud of utter and impenetrable darkness? Yes! a new Sun has shone, not on India, but on Britain—not a natural, but a political light, which has discovered the darkness and the error of our ways. A band of political economists, rushing newly from the schools, have attempted to illumine our ignorance, by showing us, that, according to their philosophy, we have mistaken the very nature of the commerce itself, and are most egregiously bewildered in the mode and principle of conducting it. That the field of

commerce is wide and wide enough, but that it is ruined by the manner of cultivation. To see how their axioms are established, it may be necessary to observe on the reasoning, and the facts by which they are supported.

The chief arguments adduced in favour of the capacity of the Indian trade, arise out of principles supposed to be long established, and therefore familiar to commerce in general, without adverting to the dissimilitude of Indian commerce with that of other countries. Much of the fallacy in the arguments that have been offered on the subject, has its origin in the fundamental error of assuming, that the manners, habits, and wants, of the natives of India, are the same with those of the inhabitants of countries, with whom a closer and nearer interest has been maintained in the ordinary commercial course. But one might as well attempt to include all the wants and necessities of every people on the face of the habitable world in one term and description, and to provide for them by a single contrivance, as to lay down any general rule which should apply invariably to all.

There may be modes, it is true, more favourable than others, for facilitating and speeding the slow march of commerce; and these may have been so much approved in their experiment, as to afford the grounds of commercial maxims; but then they all presume, what is not admitted here, as regards our export commerce, the capacity of extensive trade. Particular means may spread and scatter commerce where it previously exists; but they will not create it where it does not.

All barter must depend, it is conceived, on the peculiarity of the parties dealing together, and of their abi-

ty to supply or receive in exchange the surplus produce and manufactures of each other. In the approximation of countries in climate and habits, the commerce, generally speaking, may be supposed to be more wide and complete, and in their relative distance from each other, in one or other of these respects, it will be in the same degree confined and imperfect. In neighbouring or contiguous countries, where the climate is alike, and the products similar, and where customs vary but little, the natural and artificial wants must, in a great measure, be the same, and the mode of providing for them must generally correspond; each will, therefore, have to spare for the other, when it is wanted, more of its natural or manufactured produce, according to its respective means, from some favouring circumstance either of soil, of season, or of population. Such countries, having the same necessities, the same means of life, the same manners, with few essential differences, will have more to dispose of, that is suited to each other's use, in case of need. Here the articles of necessity and luxury are alike convertible to the exigencies of both; and must, therefore, from the accidents and inconveniences of life, be more generally required in exchange. Scarcely any thing of superabundant production, either in growth or labour, but what may be turned to the good of those who possess, or the use of those wanting it. This applies to the condition of the family of European states or nations, relatively with each other, to whom, as their general situation is alike, general rules may be applicable.

With countries distant from one another, such as

Great Britain, China, and India; of a climate differing from one another, in the nature of its produce; and of manners, and laws and religions, as opposite as climate; it is not to be expected that they will have much to exchange with each other, as fitted to each other's use; nor is there the same facility of supplying to one another what the necessities of each might demand. In export commerce, articles of necessity, whether primary for food, or secondary for convenience, will form the bulk of the trade. The intervening distance between the latter countries and our own, and the perishable nature of what is assignable for the food of man, precludes any wide interchange of the articles of the first necessity: others of convenience are as little transferable between the distinct countries as the primary ones, from the difference of climate and the wants to which it gives rise, as well as from popular manners. In addition to these contravening causes, are to be mentioned the jealous policy of the law in one instance, and religion in the other, co-operating also with the unabating rigour of an unalterable law, which throw their mighty influence into the scale, preponderating already, and will not suffer it to rise to its balance.

The Chinese law shuts the door completely against foreign intercourse, no matter with what view, and with what condescensions it may be sought. The event of the late national embassy is sufficiently declaratory of the fact. The mode, too, of carrying on the little commerce that this extensive empire chooses to allow, through a narrow and distrustful wicket, and this only half opened, may teach one what to look for in a trade

so conducted.* The religion and law of the Hindûs act in the same, though not exactly in so direct and obvious a way. Their religion is law, and the law religion. As the law is understood to be revealed, it will not submit to alteration; but keeps the subjects of it in one undeviating slavery. The Hindu is the same servile, unchanged, and unchangeable creature now, that he was several centuries ago; the obedient child of the law, and participating of the fixed and inveterate habit of the parent. The influence of climate confirms and strengthens the arbitrary dominion of the law. These make and keep him a segregated being from the great body of his kind; fearful of, and flying from, the contact of strangers; and refusing any, and all, direct intercourse. His own soil produces in abundance, and almost without the trouble of culture, all that is necessary to his wants. The fertility of the soil superinduces an unconquerable indolence. Religion, interposing, narrows and limits his wants, and will not permit them, in spite of inclination, to run into excess. His customs and habits are subservient to, and regulated by the law; instead of giving a tone and character to the law itself. An uniform and prescribed food satisfies his appetite,—a thin and unvarying garment covers him from the weather,—his religious ceremonies determine the quality of his clothes. An humble edifice shelters him from the change of season, and the heat of the climate requires that it should be open to the air. The nature of

* It is unnecessary to speak of the nature and peculiarity of the China trade, since it seems generally understood, that it will be left, with very little alteration, on its present footing.

the dwelling precludes costly furniture, and the household utensils conform to the primitive simplicity of the arrangement. The maintenance of this scanty establishment, is also admirably provided for by the policy of the law, in the division of casts;—a distribution, which induces the dependence of individuals on each other, and integrally on themselves, for their constant and unfluctuating support. Whether man in this condition be fitted to help and assist the commerce of a state of society exactly the reverse, would seem scarcely to admit of a question: man, too, not in a barbarous, but a civilized condition, endowed with, and communicating science, exercising the most curious arts, and capable of estimating all the ornaments of life; but excluded from indulgence in them, as it should seem, by the prescription of his charter. Is this a being, it may be asked, who may be drawn into new relations? who may be cheated from his habits and his prejudices, and be taken in the toils of trade? What is the history of our own, and of all other experiments on this singular and extraordinary phenomenon? The Portuguese and Dutch have maintained a friendly understanding with him, it is hardly to be called a trade, even longer than ourselves, and they have made as little progress as ourselves, in moulding him to their commercial purposes. The French, with their well-known pliancy of temper, and peculiar arts of colonization, have endeavoured, in their turn, to make a more fortunate impression, and have experienced an equal disappointment with other European competitors. The Americans, also, have attempted the same thing, and with the same ill success. The scheme, then, has not failed for want of

experiments or perseverance; but from fixed and immutable causes, that cannot be overcome. Not one of these mercantile and enterprizing powers, in an intercourse of two centuries and a half, has been able to introduce into a society, constituted as is the Hindû, the slighest taste or desire, and the reason I have attempted to explain, for the articles of their respective manufactures. None of them, it is admitted, have aimed at the introduction of such a taste through the previous removal, as some of the advocates for free trade would counsel, of the prejudice of religion and native customs. These successive adventurers had seen the country and the people, whom they were desirous of engaging in trade, and were convinced, by their own eyes, of the impracticability of such an attempt; if they had not been before assured of the impolicy of it, from the known operation of causes and effects. They were content to go on in the smooth and beaten way—to wait for the dispersion of existing popular prejudices through the medium of commercial intercourse—not in the rashness and weakness of the new philosophy, to take prejudices by storm, and convert them in the perverted order of things, into the means instead of the end of commerce. If the adventurers failed in this their practice, they had at least reason and experience in their favour, and will take no shame for the result.

From the failure of these repeated experiments, and from the nature of the European export trade with India, which I have endeavoured to describe, all rational speculation for the extension of exchangeable commerce would seem hopeless and at an end.

Large and unbounded as the field of India is, it is not a recipient for our superabundant produce; it

affords no vent for our labouring export commerce, nor holds out any fair assurance of success to future attempts or to future adventurers.

The same causes, that put a limit to our exports to India, would seem to interpose a barrier, equally insurmountable, to the advance of our import trade from that country. If the various produce of its soil presents certain articles in commercial demand, they are in general the common growth of other countries, nearer in point of position, or preferable from peculiar policy to our encouragement; or they are of such a nature as to govern and prescribe their own extent. Of the first kind are cotton and sugars, the growth of our West India Islands —of the second may be mentioned indigo, and hemp, and indeed sugar, which would require the outlay of British capital to extend them beyond their present cultivation:* and of the last, spices, drugs and saltpetre,

* They who recommend the cultivation of the Export Trade from India, to a farther extent than as at present practised, by the pursuit of new branches of Commerce, would do well to deliberate on the following passage, in the Supplement to the Appendix to the Fourth Report. Page 20.

"But the grand objection of a Commercial nature to this new Trade, is that a *considerable capital* must be *transferred* from *Great Britain* to *carry it on*. In one of the Papers from Bengal, it is hypothetically stated, that in a few years the Export of Sugar, from that Country, might be raised to 100,000 tons. Doubtless, in a vast extent of fertile soil, stretching from the sea almost to Delhi, it may be possible to carry the culture of Sugar, and various other articles, to a very great length; and persons, unacquainted with the circumstances of that Country, might imagine, from reading such a Statement, that the main thing to be done, was, only to open the door wide enough for Exportation. The fact, however, is, that four or five Millions Sterling from this Country must be furnished, to *pay* for the *first cost*, and the *transportation* of that quantity of Sugar; for Bengal has no such fund

certainly valuable articles, but of little bulk, and necessarily limited in use, form the most material part; and could afford not much employment, either for our merchants or our ships. The general inapplicability of Indian produce to European consumption, and the expence of carriage, from the circumstance of distance between the country growing, and the country consuming it, will allow of the importation of few, if any articles, into Europe, beyond those enumerated.

The Manufactures of India, in European demand, or adapted to European consumption, lie in as narrow a compass as the natural produce. These are piece-goods, chintzes, and muslins; articles of manufacture common to European, as well as Indian states, and, therefore, as coming into competition with domestic manufacture, not likely to receive any preference, so as to increase the present demand for them. If, contrary to the obvious policy of the European states, these articles should be preferred to like articles of home manufacture, it might even be doubted, notwithstanding the all-devouring dictum of political œconomists, whether the supply, from the stubborn nature of the Hindû people, could be rendered commensurate with the demand. The artificers of India, like all other casts, have their peculiar destination, and are so distributed and disposed, as to answer the views of the great system by which they are governed. The Hindû constitution is a kind of patriarchal institution, by which the members are made to administer to the wants and conveniences of the family

of its own, applicable to any purpose of that kind; and the same observation must be applied to any large extension of *other* NEW ARTICLES."

association, and their offices are confined, as it were, under the roof of the little republic, and with an aspect purely to its needs. The weaver, and every other description of mechanic, the farmer, the dealer, and the labourer, forms a distinct and separate class, bearing a relative proportion to one another, in respect to numbers and employments, which he is appointed to fulfil, and the ends he is intended to serve. Every one of these has a mark and an indelible character impressed upon him, which cannot be erased. Each is doomed to labour in the walk allotted to him, from generation to generation. It is as impossible to escape from one cast to another, as to exchange the occupation that gives the designation and name to the cast, by which it is known. The skill and art, and labour of one cast is not transferable, therefore, in aid and assistance of another.* A great excess of any one given manufacture, over the present supply, cannot of consequence be expected; not on account of any niggardliness of nature, in the produce of materials, but from the state of man, whose hand

* It is remarked in a recent publication, treating incidentally on this subject, that the labour of certain mechanics might be convertible, with proper care, to other pursuits, than to which it is devoted by the unyielding law of cast, and by means of a very simple stratagem; which is no other, than by prevailing on some principal members of the tribe in requisition, to set an example to their subordinates, when the work would be done. The device is certainly new, and curious enough: but unfortunately the contrivance is not specified by which the conversion of the principals is to be effected. And until this very necessary operation be revealed, it may consist with common understanding to suppose, that the heads of casts may possibly be found as inveterate in their prejudices as their inferiors, and may have fewer inducements, proceeding on common calculation, for quitting their assigned station.

alone can shape them into form. The condition of manufactures, as every thing else in this singular scheme of government, is fated to be stationary.

The value placed on particular artificers and their labours, and the impossibility of supplying their place, is in some sort shewn by the endless differences that are known to arise among bordering states, from the reception and entertainment of the respective artists and mechanics of each other, which not unfrequently terminate in extreme acts of hostility.

Causes and circumstances, such as these, familiarly known to those, who have any knowledge of India or her affairs, must keep the import trade from our Indian possessions, as the export commerce, on a narrow and unimproveable scale.

There are persons, however, on this side the water, who do not venture to dispute the facts on which the immediate conclusion is founded, yet scruple not to call in question the conclusion itself. These affirm, that the limitation of the existing Indian trade, which is admitted, is not owing to any natural obstacle in the way of the trade itself, but to the manner in which it is conducted, that defies all improvement. It would be absurd, say they, to pronounce on the capability and value of our Indian commerce, from the unwise course, the confined stream, in which it has been permitted to flow. Would you take the account, they exclaim, of the East India Company; which is nothing more than a recital of misadventures, from its own mismanagement, and its own incapacity for trade, as a true criterion of judging what the Indian trade might be in the hands of other persons? Then follows a tirade, a never-tiring tirade against mono-

poly and monopolists, as if to the condition of the Company, and not to physical and political causes, were imputable, all the defects and evils about which they rail.

I have already stated, all that is felt to be necessary to urge in refutation of the principal allegation against the Company's monopoly, by shewing that it was the only mean devisable in the wisdom of the legislature, for managing the trade of India, and had been made subservient in every stage of its progress, in contradistinction of all other monopolies, to the public benefit, which ever had been preferred to the particular good of the Company. I shall only offer, at present, a short remark or two, on the glaring effects of the monopoly, in the estimation of the impugners of the Company's Charter, and their agency.

It is argued that there is a carelessness and indolence in all joint stock Companies, that check the enterprise and efforts necessary for the spread and establishment of commerce: and that there is, moreover, an extravagance in all their concerns, that renders their success, whatever that may be, when compared with the proceedings of individuals, unprofitable in the issue.

It would seem not quite fair or equitable to consider the trade of the East India Company as a pure monopoly, or to apply those principles to it, or to reason upon it, as an establishment of that description. For the English East India Company; and, indeed, all foreign Companies of a like nature, though savouring of monopoly, have yet allowed, for the most part, a private trade to co-exist with their own: so that the exertions of individuals, and, in respect to the English East India Com-

pany, on a somewhat extensive scale, have co-operated with the Company's endeavours, but hitherto without any notable effect, to enlarge our Indian commerce. At particular seasons the whole mercantile community have been admitted as sharers in the speculation: at other times the different and distinct members of the Company have enjoyed, and have used the liberty of separate, with their privilege of a combined trade; and, at *all* periods, in the history of Indian commerce, the officers of the Company's marine, partaking of a commercial character, improved by local knowledge, have been permitted to carry on, if not rival, at least congenial speculations with those of their employers. All these united and separate means have been called into use; and, if they have proved unavailing, we must look to some other cause than indolence to account for the event.

Such is the monopoly of the East India Company in practice; and it might be inferred, and probably with truth, that if the public had been generally permitted to trade with India on unlimited principles, instead of the calumniated monopolists, it might not have been disposed to make equal efforts, or, if disposed, might not have sped equally in its purpose with the East India Company.

If the scheme of open trade has not yet been put for any length of time to the experiment, the principle has been sufficiently essayed and acted on, in the commercial transactions of the several officers in the Company's naval service, to shew what it is capable of. Individual industry has in this way been submitted to the test, with all the stimulus which individual gain, or the hope of it, will inspire, and its achievements are notorious. How has it promoted the interests of the trade?

How has it answered the views of individuals? These private adventures have been conducted on the most advantageous plan; free from the incumbrance and burthen of outward and homeward freight, no inconsiderable bounty, it may be thought, to liberal speculation. Yet, with all these appurtenances and means to boot, the trade of India is now, with little difference, what it was some centuries ago. The persons, of whom I am now speaking, are not strangers to commerce, but have been schooled in it from their infancy. They are not foreigners by birth or habit: they are merchants in every sense of the word, English merchants: they have the same intelligence, the same spirit, the same enterprise, with the most enlightened, the most liberal, and the most adventurous of their fellow merchants. Shall it be permitted to the latter to tell them that they are dolts in their profession, or that they want the common energies which characterise the universal body of their countrymen? So far as concerns this particular class of merchants, then, the spirit of individual energy has been drawn out, and its effect has been ascertained. Of the same materials with them, the British mercantile body is constituted, and from the application of the same power, the same operation may again be expected; it is unreasonable to expect any other. You may increase the scale of action, but the bearing of it will be the same, the degree alone will be different. I am not inclined to pass over some disabilities under which this description of personages labour, in relation to their ships and their masters. They are, it is true, directed and confined in their speculations, by the will of their employers, and by the destination of the voyage. Their endeavours are chained, as it were, to

the sea-coast, and the different ports of India. This, undoubtedly, is the fact. They have not, however, been fixed to an unvaried spot; but have shifted their position, in the circle of their employment, through the whole round of the territory, from the nearest to the most distant point of the Company's possessions. Where, it may be asked, could a more eligible opening to commerce afford itself, than in the very spots to which these officers are sent? At which a large body of licensed British traders, unconnected with the East India Company, are also domiciled. This is the very seat, of all others, at which commerce may be expected to commence; and whence it must diverge, in a natural channel, to other parts of the Peninsula. The native inhabitants must be more social here, and less disinclined to commerce, than in the interior of India. Trade must flourish here, if it can take root any where. From the willingness of the soil here, if it should be found kind, we might anticipate its quality in other places.

A constant and unceasing trade has been maintained for more than two centuries with the settlements on the several coasts of India, not only by the English, but other foreign companies, and residents, who have stocked their markets, as their several interests would dictate, with all the commodities that were likely to satisfy the wants, or gratify the acquired taste of the natives, who had been prepared for the reception of such commodities, by long acquaintance with, and observation of, European manners, and the improved means and luxuries of their life. And what is the event of this history? Why,—except in two scant articles that have been partially introduced, the natives have rejected all our offers and

temptations. Is it that our proffered merchandize came not reasonably, in point of charge, to their hands? The markets, it may be observed, have at times been supplied to a satiety, or over-glutted. Articles of European produce have often fallen on that account far below the prime cost, and still they have not seduced, in this most inviting shape, a solitary native to become a consumer of our commerce.

Have our own East India Company, with all the foreign mercantile societies who have ever set foot in India, made no enquiry, or had no opportunity of informing themselves of the articles which might be useful or exchangeable in native commerce? Or have they all, unaccountably, dropped down on places, where the natives, different from the body of the inhabitants of the Peninsula, have neither wants for foreign produce, nor the capacity for trade? Should these several adventurers have neglected every means of personal information; a knowledge of this sort would have imperceptibly impressed itself, in a long and continued intercourse, by the discovered wants of the natives, and in the manifested desire to satisfy them. These rather, than invitation, or the winning courtesies and arts of trade, form the first and most important foundation of commerce on any large field. Such adventurers cannot, therefore, be imagined as wholly ignorant, at this day, of the commercial exigencies of India, much less can they be supposed to have been led into any very striking error, as to the local situations adapted to their views; for, fall where they would, they must have lighted among men, the expected consumers of their exports, of one and the same character.

If there be any people less variable than others in their wants, their habits, and their prejudices, it is the mass of the people of the East. When you contemplate the one, you have the whole race before you. A complete family likeness pervades the entire human species. The natives on the coast are the same with the natives every where else. If the first have been able to discover what their own wants are, they are acquainted, necessarily, with the wants of their kind in the whole breadth and length, the square and the circumference of India. If the European adventurer should heedlessly overlook the circumstance of those wants, or omit to govern his speculation by them, it would not be very probable, if any commercial understanding or talent be presumed to be among the acquisitions or properties of the native, that he also would be guilty of the same fault, or would fail to benefit by the omission. Now, whatever unfitness or disinclination there may be in the native character to foreign commerce, there is a peculiar fitness in it, and a curious determination towards internal or domestic trade. A more zealous, patient, persevering, and economical commercialist than the native trader, cannot be imagined. Shew him the least prospect of success, the slightest hope of profit, and he is to be engaged, either as a principal, or a willing and active agent, in any and every branch of trade. He is, from this very disposition, I speak from some experience, the constant instrument, the great and invariable promoter of European commerce. He will buy with you—he will sell with you—he will do any thing, but be the consumer of your merchandize.

To see how far the native propensity to trade may

be carried, it is needful only to refer to the well-known, incontrovertible, though scarcely credible, fact, that he will put on the character of a dealer in European commodities, not with the vain and fruitless expectation of selling his goods to his native brethren, for he knows how vain and bootless the expectation would be, but for the purpose of re-selling, what he has bought from Europeans, to Europeans—from the non-resident to the resident. Thus he becomes, in the true spirit of trade, the second-hand vender, the retailer, and even huckster, of European produce to European consumers. There is not a settlement of British India, nay, scarcely a cantonment, but what exhibits one or more of these examples of this aptitude and eagerness for trade. It may be added, too, that there is scarcely a bazar, or market, in the Peninsula, but what hangs out, in its alluring display, to catch the eye of the passenger, the unheeded temptation of European manufactures.

It will be seen, from these notorious facts, that arts enough have been tried to clear and improve the way for the introduction of British exports: and it will not be doubted; that the same industrious agents, who are so busy and so anxious for the accomplishment of British objects, are equally active in the service and promotion of their own; that, knowing our demands, and their own ability to supply them, we may allow them credit for drawing, under the stimulus of gain, as largely and deeply from their resources, as the resources are competent to answer.

It is only justice to the East India Company to notice, that they have not been wanting to themselves or to the country, in co-operation with the spirit and energy

of their native subjects, in endeavouring to discover and profit by all the gifts of nature, in this her most genial and productive region, as well as the efforts and works of art. The many commercial progresses, made under the Company's auspices, or their more immediate direction, throughout their old and new territorial acquisitions, and in the bordering countries, on every side of their dominions, are in proof of their desire to extend the confines of their commerce. The published reports and records of these peaceful embassies, afford the same impressive evidence of the liberality in which these discoveries were sought. Not a part of the vast possessions of the Company has been left unexplored, and its productive powers have been alike laid open, in a fearless confidence, to the naturalist, the merchant, and the politician. It would be difficult to point to any geographical division of India, of which the public have not already an accurate and digested account of what it has to offer in natural bounty, or the improvement of art. That these various stores have not been neglected, when found, the most undeniable proof is afforded, in the fullness of the Company's warehouses; and too convincing a memorial of the superabundance of the supply to European demand, is to be discovered in the stagnate state of its consumption. If more articles were imported, in the present posture of export commerce, what other end could they serve, than to increase a stock, which is already a burthen?

What is there, it may be enquired, that has not been attempted to render India commercially profitable to Britain? What has India to give, that is not now enjoyed in ample provision? What is there in the most

sanguine expectation of the most sanguine speculatist, that he would recommend to be adopted?

I have not been able to collect from the most warm opposer of the Company's Charter, the most wild projector in the new school of commercial policy, in what he really looks for benefit from an open and free trade. He talks loudly and unweariedly of the unbounded capabilities of the soil, of the countless numbers of its people, and of the immense riches which both might be made to yield. But however eloquent on his general plan and prospect, he is absolutely mute on every subject connected with the realisation of his scheme. He favours us not with any enumeration of the objects of his contemplated exports, or the nature and extent of his returns. He explains not his methods for converting an impracticable people into the obedient instruments of his interests and his will.—He condescends not to go into the tedious, intricate labyrinths of detail—but takes it for granted that his proposition is irrefragable, and that nothing else is wanted, but to cast down the barrier against European ingress into India, when all the flatteries of his golden dreams will be substantiated. It will not suit with the ardour of his temperament, to delay his rich harvest, until he shall have satisfied his landlords, the Parliament of Great Britain, how he intends to use the field and the implements, which he is desirous that they should take from the Company, to entrust to his better management. No task could be more irksome, than to ask of him, how he means to cultivate the soil—and to what ends, even in his own imagination, it will conduce. These circumstances must be taken into the serious consideration of Parliament,

though they do not, unaccountably, enter into the present views of other parties. Zeal may be the feature of one; but prudence and discretion is the distinguishing characteristic of the other. Parliament will not disturb the settled state of things, without knowing that the change, which is solicited, be for the benefit of the country; and that the benefit will be certain and constant.

The suggestion, perhaps, of a few pertinent questions, as to what the Reformists *specifically* want, and how they intend to compass it, would be decisive of the question, whether the Charter should be renewed or not. The East India Company might safely trust the event to such a test.

There are Quixottes in commerce as well as chivalry, who would sail on a voyage of discovery, for the purpose of attacking and subduing monsters, not the indigenous inhabitants of the jungles and the forests, numerous enough in nature, but the creatures of a clouded and fevered imagination: these disturbed minds are eager to commit themselves to the vasty deep, in quest of wonderous adventures, if their friends, or the law, will suffer them to roam at large. Some commercial Quacks, too, not quite so mad, but fully as desperate, as these self-deluded beings, would free the trade from all existing obstructions, by a bold nostrum, by a "kill or cure" practice, without once bestowing a thought on the organic formation, the physical imperfection of the body, on which they would try their powers. Ignorant of general principles, narrowed in the scope of their enquiries, and fearless about consequences, these empyrics would handle without caution, what a regular and skilful

physician would tremble to touch: he is too well acquainted with the history of his profession, the true principles of his science, and the value of his character, to force a remedy which has been carried as far, as a watchful and observant practice dare venture to apply it; where there is no encouraging probability of effecting further good; and where the prescription, if it should be as operative as might be desired, would be more speedily destructive, than the continuance of the evil; when the patient, though he might escape the disease, would be dispatched by the fate-disposing dose of the doctor.

One might think, that the effect of an open trade with India has been sufficiently ascertained, in the instance of the American trade; though it be not exactly analogous to a common trade, under the conduct of the unlimited members of our own mercantile community. America, it is known, has maintained for several years a trade with the different coasts of India, by virtue of a treaty concluded by her with the British court, and she has yet to look for any considerable advantage from her exports; or any addition to her importable articles from that country. To break the force of the inference from the first circumstance, it is said, that America is not, like England, a manufacturing country, and, therefore, has but few objects of export. But does she maintain no commercial relation with manufacturing countries, with which she might barter her marketable produce in the Western world, in return for articles in supposed demand in the East? Is there no benefit, individually or nationally, to be derived, from this compound species of commerce? Is not America in the actual habit of resorting to this intermediate course of trade, in the

export of articles of European consumption?* If she confines herself solely to these, the conclusion is inevitable; that the market of India is not open to any other. The presumption, arising out of the fact of her present imports from India, which are stated to be on a large scale, is mainly to be repelled by a reference to the peculiarity of the present times, and to the immediate restricted condition of British commerce; as also to the influence of privileges enjoyed by America, originating in her national and neutral character; privileges of a temporary nature, and answering but a temporary purpose. These circumstances afford not any ground for argument, either in favour of the latitude of the export or the import commerce of India. America has leapt, by a fortuitous and fortunate state of things, into the seat of the East India Company; but she fills it only on sufferance, and must yield it up, the instant that circumstances permit the resumption of it. The neutral American, in the interim, dispenses, what the East India Company, partaking of the quality of a belligerent, is not allowed to dispense; and what the English merchant, equally with the Company, would be excluded from dispensing. It would not be easy to draw an inference, operating one way or other on the East India Company, that would not fall with the like pressure, be it more or less, on the body of British merchants.

The American trade, proceeding, as it does, on a fortunate and temporary contingency, can decide nothing in consideration of the general question, of what the trade

* The Madeira, consumed in India, is chiefly imported by Americans.

is susceptible, or of the policy by which it should be governed. The question must be determined not on fancied analogies, but on established facts and reasonings, directly referable to the subject, and about which there can be no dispute.

It would be insulting to your understanding to repeat, what has been before remarked, on the nature and history of our Indian commerce; which, whatever its character at the beginning, at this day depends essentially, as has been shewn, on our local territorial dominion. This, from the very numerical amount of those, over whom it is exercised, must be taken to spring from the favourable opinion of the subject people of our imaginary power, if not of our actual or relative force. Does not this universally admitted fact meet the enquiry in its teeth, and challenge a discussion by itself, preliminary to an investigation into pretended popular rights, that the legislature has hitherto controlled?

The necessity of preserving and continuing this empire of opinion must be apparent, even to those, whose ungovernable impetuosity would destroy it. How, it may be enquired, is this favourable impression to be kept up, with the introduction of the British population into India, bent on gain alone, and with the importation at the same time of all the stratagems and wiles of trade, calculated to insure it? What opinion would be entertained of the victors of the Mahomedan conquerors, the successors of the ancient, the rivals of the modern Alexander, if stooping from their state and superiority, they should dwindle down at once to the degree of petty and squabbling shopkeepers? Spare us the mortifying sight of seeing a constituent part of the sovereignty of India,

the materials of which the whole is composed, with a pack or wallet on his back, traversing the country which he ruled, and with a paltry, pedlar-like spirit, soliciting the encouragement of customers, and prying for an opportunity of sordid profit, in a forced barter of unadapted and unaccommodating commodities! If the outward bearing of the East India Company shall be thought above their mercantile condition, this, the opposite and reverse of their conduct, but the natural consequence of separate trade, would be as much below and incompatible with the condition of those, who should expect to maintain a rule, which is, and only can be sustained by opinion and reputation.

I have submitted to you, what I intended from the beginning, a rough and general outline of the East India Company's trade, and have explained the original peculiarity, the subsequent modifications, and the mode of prosecuting it; and I have endeavoured to shew that it is a trade of an unique character, introduced by singular circumstances; not so much by the arts and instruments of peace, as by the power and influence of the sword: that it has preserved throughout the mixed quality with which it was primitively impressed: that it was never regarded either by statesmen or the legislature, as of great substantive importance, but as a relative good: that it is limited in its nature, and incapable of artificial extent: that it has been cultivated in the way, which in the sense and wisdom of the legislature, it is most profitable to conduct it, with a view to its preservation, and to its utility to the genuine interests of the country: that all the speculations of rendering it more productive, are founded in misapprehension of its prin-

ciples, as well as of the manner in which it is carried on: and that the evils ascribed to the mode of managing it, are imputable to the organism of the trade itself. In the proportion that I shall have succeeded in my design, I shall have furnished an answer to the objections, which I wish not unnecessarily to combat, that are imagined to spring out of the particular constitution of the East India Company. The object is large enough in itself, without encumbering it with superfluous matter.

There are, however, one or two exceptions, somewhat incompatible in their tendency, that are urged with so peculiar a pertinacity against the Company, that I may be excused in glancing at them. The first presumes the incompetency of the Company, from the instruments employed by them, or their neglect, from nearer and preferable considerations, of the objects of commerce, to improve its interests, so far as they may be carried. The latter infers, with an opposite aspect, that the prodigal waste of the Company's Asiatic establishments, swallows up the enormous profits of a trade, already large and luxuriant, and however it might be extended. In laying the ground of these strange and seemingly contradictory objections, it is stated, in substance, that the servants of the East India Company, as their masters, are alike intent on forwarding the ends of sovereignty, at the expence of commerce: that the aim and interests of all parties, no matter what the direction and destination of their service, whether military or civil, political or commercial, is to extend the local limits of the state, at all and every hazard. It is from the increase of territory alone, as the objection assumes, that the views of all can be fulfilled.

But whatever policy may influence the Company in giving a preference to one, rather than the other object, equally within the benefit and protection of the Charter, remains to be explained by the favourers of the objection; but it is plain, from the whole bearing of the Company's history, that it is not bottomed in any consideration of interest. For whatever pecuniary advantage has at any time been derived from the British Indian possessions, has invariably flowed through the channel and immediate agency of trade, while the territory has been indebted, and largely, with the prospect, however, of eventual payment, to the simple sources and operations of commerce. So that if interest had any thing to do with the supposed bias of the Company, it would have given it a determination the other way.

The mistake of the influence of territorial acquisitions on the whole body of the servants of the Company, is more egregious even than the error immediately noticed. There might be some reason in the supposition, that the military and revenue officers of the Company, with their respective and comprehensive suites, might possibly be influenced by considerations of territorial aggrandizement; for they have a discernible interest, which is meant not to be denied, in the extension of the dominions of the East India Company. But it would not be easy to trace any affinity in the views of those classes with the servants of a commercial description. The latter draw their entire emoluments from the province of trade, and, according to the commercial policy of the Company, these emoluments depend on the success of the object under their particular management; their services being requited by a per-

centage proportioned to their extent. There are, besides, high offices and posts of confidence and honour, exclusively allotted to the servants of the commercial department, who, when once devoted to this separate branch, are fixed and immutable in their position. So that direct advantage, future advancement, with imperative and prescribed duty, have all and each a sway in determining the exertion of individuals, and in keeping them in the course in which they are required. Is it probable, then, that the commercial servants of the Company will be diverted from their more immediate interests, influencing, as they are every where found to influence, human action and conduct; and, neglecting their nearer and lawful advantages, be active alone in seeking the supposed good of their employers in a foreign track, and by unbidden ways?

Of the alleged expensive establishments in India, I shall forbear to say much. These, were they even more splendid and costly than they are, are of concern only to the East India Company; unless, by a different dispensation of things than at present exists, they should become burthensome to the country. It may be a matter of prudence for itself to consider, whether these are fixed on too munificent a scale, either as regards their use, or the expenditure they occasion, mingling with the consideration of cost, the magnitude of the affairs to which these establishments relate—the internal means of management which they afford—and the policy which enjoins that they should be conducted on an adequate and liberal principle. If these establishments shall be held by some to go beyond their object, or to exceed what is necessary or prudent, in point of expence,

having relation to the Company's profit, purely, they will reflect, that what is lost to the Company is not, consequently, lost to the state; but that which passes not, out of an excess of liberality, into the Company's treasury, goes into the pockets of its servants, and in that way ministers, in as certain a channel, to the accumulate wealth of the mother country.

The opposers of the Company's Charter, who can and will see nothing advantageous in its constitution, would seem to err in this as in every other instance. They who have nothing before their eyes, and in their wishes, but the gains and profits of trade, as resultive from our Eastern possessions, may naturally wish to square their arrangements, by the same narrow notions and passions that exorb their thoughts, and engross their hearts. But men, who are bound to look beyond themselves, will descry, perhaps, even in these reviled establishments, more real national advantage, than could possibly have been produced by all the energies of commerce, however successfully applied.

A mere view of the numbers of those comprehended in the different establishments of the Company, will give a tolerable idea of their relative importance and consequence above the ordinary fruit of trade. The latter is a single, and not always a cultivated object, in the numerous states that have come under the dominion of the Company, and has formed, from the nature of the people, and their constitution, both formerly and now, but a small part of the wealth of the respective states; while the issues from the territory, in revenue and produce, constitute the main riches, and supply the most material employment, and serve the mots lucrative

ends to the government presiding over them. Now the whole amount of the revenue, direct or indirect, is collected, converted, and consolidated into money, by the hands of the European servants of the Company. The protection and defence of the countries themselves, yielding this mixed and incalculable amount, are at the Company's entire management; and every one of the departments of state, in a civil as well as military relation, too numerous to be particularized, is filled by officers of the Company's appointment. All the functionaries of these different descriptions are provided for, in the singular scheme of our Eastern government, out of the rents of the territorial acquisitions: the collection and the wide application of these, which naturally would have formed occupations for, and afforded the means of enriching many thousands of the native subjects of such countries, are politically appropriated, as so many separate fields for the promotion of the fortunes of our own countrymen. From these abundant and fruitful sources, above 3000 European officers of a military description, and some hundreds of civil servants, are directly and constantly maintained, and from the liberal scale of their stipends and emoluments, are enabled to lay the foundation of successive and accumulative fortunes; to be communicated to the wealth, and spent within the body of the mother country. In this way, a large proportion of her own industrious and enterprising progeny finds the means of subsistence and advancement, from other provisions than her own; and instead of substracting any thing from the public stock, is, by a felicitous arrangement, rendered serviceable to the increase of the common fund. Hence, wealth is perpetually rolling into

the parent state from our Indian possessions; supplying the natural waste; increasing the general store; and affording, in so much new capital, the germ of further increase. Thus is India to be considered in the most valuable and precious relation to Great Britain,* and so has she ever been contemplated by the eye of the statesman and politician.

I would not, however, be supposed as desirous of throwing any disparagement on the value of our Eastern commerce, though I assign not to it the first place among the benefits derived from the existing Indian system. I do not lose sight of the annual millions, which it is the easy mean of raising, toward the support of the burthen of the state; but this circumstance does not render me blind to the manner in which that mean is aided, through the private channels of individual acquisitions in the East; and in the very act of bringing them to our shores, as well as the ulterior services which they effect, when absolutely arrived there, in their reproductive quality, to the interests of the country. Each of these advantages would be admirable enough in itself, if it had no rival benefit opposed to it; but they together form, like the mixed system, out of which they spring, the most stupendous work of human policy, approved by the experience of ages, adapting itself to intervenient circumstances, and improving in its course to perfection, by yielding to the discovered exigencies of the season and the system.

* This is happily enforced in the Letter of the Right Hon. Henry Dundas, of the 2d April, 1800; page 3 of the Supplement to the 4th Report.

If I have spoken of the simple motion of this vast machine, in external application chiefly, it is from a supposition, that its uses and properties at home must be self-evident, and obvious to the least inquisitive and observant mind. Negligent and careless as men may actually or impliedly be, in all that relates to India and her affairs, it will be impossible for them to shut their eyes to one of the incidents arising out of the Indian system, as discoverable at our homes, in the tens of thousands of the British population, to whom it presents a constant and never varying support.*

He who would throw so wonderful a piece of mechanism out of order, without well considering the effect upon the machine itself, and on the ends which it is designed to fulfil, as well as on the powers to be substituted to bring about the same or meliorated purposes, would be guilty of a rashness, which could not be defended by any present policy, or justified by subsequent success. That the existing system may have its defects, is not intended to be disputed. Let these be pointed out, and the requisite amendments made: but let us not begin by destruction, by condemning the whole arrangement, because it is not perfect, (what human institution is?) in all its parts.

It may be thought, (and some profound politicians have been of that opinion,) that the Indian system does not sufficiently provide, or does not constantly insure, from the applicability, or necessity of applying the Company's capital to the exigencies of the territory as well

* These are stated in round numbers at 30,000 persons. Page 144 of the Papers respecting the Negotiation.

as trade, so many imports from India, as its resources may conveniently or ordinarily spare. Though the present circumstances of European commerce render this no very deplorable evil; yet other seasons may ensue, which may cause it to be viewed in such a light. It would not be prudent, or safe, perhaps, to deny, in the face of such authorities, that temporary inconveniences have happened, from this alleged defect in the existing Indian system, and that it may be wise to prevent, by a precautionary policy, in a new provision in the coming Charter, the possible recurrence of them in the time to come. But deferring, as I am bound to defer, to the wisdom and experience of these statesmen, I should be still indisposed to carry reformation beyond the single evil stated, or any remedial measure beyond the strict letter of their prescription. If it be necessary at certain, or at all seasons, to permit a competition with the East India Company, in bringing the produce and manufactures of India to our ports, and by other carriage than the Company's regular and chartered ships, both the parties and means of supplying what is supposed to be imperfect in the system, will be found in European covenanted and licensed residents in India, and the local shipping, for answering the particular policy of these statesmen,* without endangering our foreign interests

* The reader is referred for more particular information on this branch of the subject, to the Letters of the Right Hon. Henry Dundas, of the 2d April, 1800, and 21st March, 1801. And of the Marquis Wellesley of the 30th September, 1800, at pages 3, and 29, and at page 31, of the Appendix to the Supplement to the 4th Report of the House of Commons.

by the introduction of new persons, with new relations, and with opposite and opposing views. If the will of parliament shall be in unison with the advice and counsel of the cautious and practical politicians, to whom I allude, it may not be a work of any great difficulty or change, or of any material interference with settled principles, to make the requisite alterations in the system; a few regulations, to be concerted between the Board of Trade and the Company's government abroad, being all that would seem necessary for so limited a purpose. The state, however, of European commerce, at this moment, is not exactly suited for the introduction even of this moderate change.

If I am slow to touch a system, and with a trembling hand, which has produced, and is still producing so much national good, I may be understood to discountenance and deprecate with the whole of my humble efforts, that wild and indiscriminate spirit of reformation, that has been avowed by the mercantile community, and which has been spread, through their influence and cries, so widely and diffusedly among the people, till it appears to have embodied and ranged them, in a temporary delusion, under one and the same banner. Destruction is the watch-word, and the maddening multitude await only the command, *to* prostrate with the eastern possessions, the Company's very warehouses with the dust. Is there no warning voice to sway them from a purpose, as unjust as it is unnatural? Is there no tongue persuasive enough to gain a moment's respite—a pause for speech—to win the deluded crowd from its error, or to plead the humble merits of the Company, in extenuation of its dazzling faults? The most modest and timid advocate may, surely,

lay claim for the Company to the virtue of having founded and established our eastern trade and Asiatic possessions, (such, such as they are!) and of having rendered them, in a sparing measure, perhaps, useful and advantageous to the mother country! If the Company's ministry has not been so wise to its own interests, or so profitable, as it might have been, to the State, let us hear, at least, before we give it up for lost, how many and what have been its mighty errors, and how they are intended to be amended by those, who would jump into its place! Let us hear, how our manufacturing and commercial politicians would cultivate the commerce, and improve the system of Indian Government, before they be snatched at once, and beyond redemption, from the possession in which they are, and put, for experiment sake, into bold and untried hands. They may condescend, perhaps, to tell us, if the boon be not unreasonable, how and when they themselves expect success from the plans which they have in perfection or conception, or, if they are not yet conceived, what they possibly may be expected to form in the course and progress of the experiment; so that if we be satisfied not with the prospect of their present views, we may not be without hope of their future policy for the management of those great interests, with which, they diffidently seek to be indulged; and at so great and imminent a risk, and, as respects the Company, and the Country, at so immediate and inevitable a loss, that nothing but the most important and certain prospective advantages could allow us even to look upon!

The present benefit of our Indian trade and possessions is of too solid and too interesting a character to

be renounced, on the demand of misguided speculatists, or ill-advised claimants, who know not what they would seek, nor comprehend what they ask.

I will not detain you by a recapitulation of facts, and arguments, that have presented themselves progressively to my own mind, and which I have endeavoured to impress on your's, in hope of shewing the nature, the importance, and the capacity of our commerce, in conjunction and relation with our Indian territory—the advantages that they produce together, and the limit beyond which they cannot pass. If these satisfy us not with their present good, they may, if properly weighed, and thoroughly understood, protect us from future evil, in dissuading the legislature from sanctioning an innovation that must injure and cannot serve.

The fairest portion of Asia is now in our complete tenure, with its immense revenues and entire trade, and both are made to contribute, to the extent of their several means, through the instrumentality of the East India Company, to the necessities and exigencies of Britain; when it is proposed, in an extravagant and ill-considered scheme, to dissolve an union of interests, that are beneficially knit together, and which, in constant alternation, in their blended form, have reciprocated the most essential services to one another, for the purpose of trying whether they can exist apart. Needs there any one to counsel against the folly of the attempt to divide interests, which, if not united by nature, have become so rivetted by time, by habit, and by circumstance, that if they should survive the act of separation, it is not probable that they can long exist in a single and independent state?

The immediate effects of such an experiment on the

existing system of Asiatic Government, on India, and its people—as well as on the revenues, and, possibly, on the constitution of the mother country, are too significant to be overlooked, and too fearful to be dissembled.

It would seem as impossible to disjoin a free and open trade, with the necessary influx of British property, and British subjects, from the colonization of India; as to sever the idea of colonization, from the independence of the Indian territory, with all the alarming consequences in its train.* Equally impracticable would it be, in contemplating the effects of the meditated change at home, to distinguish between the destruction of the Company's trade, and the diminution of the national resources, in an enormous loss of revenue, and an in-

* The report of the Special Committee, so often alluded to, is full, comprehensive, and authoritative, on this head. After stating that the Company's extensive civil and military establishments have attracted multitudes, not in the service, to repair to their settlements; the report thus proceeds to describe the general effects of an open trade;

"New enlargements of the intercourse, it is obvious, would exceedingly augment their number; the vast capital and shipping of this country, with the natural relations subsisting between it and India, all peculiar to itself, would at once pour in tides of men and money there: the sanction of any public acts at home, would, of course, dispose the governments abroad to afford the commercial encouragements there, which would correspond with the spirit of enlargement adopted here: the public opinion of a great European society, formed in this spirit, would have an influence on the sentiments of those governments; through the medium of natives, also, lands might be extensively occupied by Europeans; and the *genius* of this system, without any formed plan, would gradually and insensibly antiquate the present one, and become impatient for all the rights of British colonists; to give or to refuse which, would then be a most momentous question." Page 13—See also page 21.

tolerable addition to its charge. These results are not less luminously than satisfactorily stated, by the Executive of the East India Company, and deduced from so many, such notorious, and such incontrovertible facts, detailed in the correspondence with the Board of Controul, that it would be supererogation to reiterate the proofs on which they rest, or the arguments to which they lead.* These results are fully developed to the public eye, and exposed, in official statements, already on the table of the House of Commons. If they prevail not in making proselytes of the people from an erroneous and obstinate opinion, they cannot fail, from the force of conviction on sound and well-informed minds, to engage their representatives in a mediation between the people's prejudices and their true interests; to the prevention of an evil, as dangerous to the state, as it would be ruinous to an useful and valuable body of men.

* A free trade to and from India, and to unlimited ports, would be subversive of the benefits derived by the Company from the China trade, to the amount of one million annually; destructive of the revenue arising from the importation of tea, to the annual extent of nearly four millions sterling; productive of increase in the number, influence, and expence of revenue officers, with a proportionable decrease in the exports of woollens and metals from Great Britain, and a consequent irremediable loss to the breeding, clothing, and mining countries. These would be the immediate effects of an open trade, with numberless remote evil consequences, which are too plainly described, and clearly deduced from facts, incapable of refutation, detailed in the letter of the deputation of the Court of Directors to the Right Honourable the Earl of Buckinghamshire, of the 29th of April, 1812. Vid. Page 138 of the *Papers* respecting the *Negotiation*.

THE END.

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